OBSERVATIONS On the POEMS OF HOMER AND VIRGIL

A discourse representing the *Excellencies* of those *Works*; and the *perfections* in general, of all *Heroick Action*.

Out of the *French*,

By *JOHN DAVIES* of *KIDWELLY*

LONDON

Printed by *S. G.* and *B. G.* and are to be sold by *Dorman Newman* at the Kings-Arms in the *Poultrey*, and *Jonathan Edwin* at the three *Roses* in *Ludgate Street*. 1672.

832. c. 11

There is in the press and ready to be published.

The comparison of *Plato* with *Aristotle*, with the opinions of the Fathers on their Doctrine, and some Christian Reflections.

Judgment upon *Alexander* and *Cæsar* as also upon *Seneca*, *Plutarch*, and *Petronius*.

And are to be sold by *Jonathan Edwin* at the three Roses in *Ludgate-Street*.

Tho. Birch
April. 10. 1732.

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

To the Honourable

Sir JOHN BERKENHEAD

Master of Requests to his Majesty, *Master of the Faculties*, and one of the Members of the Honourable House of Commons.

SIR,

I *Here present you with a Discourse on the Poems of* Homer *and* Virgil, *the most accomplish'd productions of Mans's wit in their kind, their excellency being such, that*

they have been the delight and admiration of all after-ages, and the Models of all those who have since written upon the subject of Heroick Action.

As to the former, you know, Sir, what was said of him by Alexander *the Great, that Kings gave their votes for him, when* Hesiod *had only those of the Peasantry: not to urge that* Horace's *eloge of him, when he said*

—Nil molitur ineptè,

was certainly the greatest could be given an Author.

And as to Virgil, *what can be imagin'd more remarkable, than*

than that the Romans, a People so intelligent, & such as numbred crowned Heads amongst their Subjects, should render him, one day, in the Theatre, the same honours which they were wont to render Augustus; making thereby a publick acknowledgement of such a grandeur of Genius, in that admirable Person, as they thought worthy the respects due to Scepters and Diadems?

How intimately Sir, you, are acquainted with these transcendent Poets, all know that know you especially they who reflect on your

your receſſes during the late un
parallel'd Uſurpations, when th
envy'd ingenious had no other
conſolations, than thoſe of Poeſy
and Philoſophy. Theſe obſervati-
ons of my Author will haply reca
to your mind ſome your ſelf had
made on this ſubject, which, had
not the diſtractions of thoſe times
ſmother'd them, might have
prevented the preſent Addr
of theſe to you, from,

SIR,

Your moſt humble, and

moſt obliged Servant,

JO. DAVIES

OBSERVATIONS UPON HOMER AND VIRGIL.

Observation I:

Of the value of their ſeveral Works.

F all the productions Man's mind is capable of, the *Epick Poem* is doubtleſs the moſt accompliſhed, in regard it involves all the perfections of the others. This is the general ſentiment of all the ||Learned, though *Ariſtotle* attributes the advantage to *Tragedy*, as to the quantity, in as much as its parts being of leſs

|| *Poet.* c. 26.

extent, and bearing a more equal and limited proportion, it is more proper to excite a leſs weariſome & leſs languiſhing divertiſement. Yet may it be affirm'd, that the other advantages, which the *Heroick* Poem hath over the *Dramatick*, are ſo conſiderable, nay ſo much acknowledg'd ſuch, that all allow it to be the moſt excellent and moſt tranſcendent of all humane productions. So that the Poems of *Homer* and *Virgil* being, by the conſent of all ages, the moſt perfect modells that ever appear'd in that kind of writing; to judge which of them ought to be preferr'd before the other, is, in my opinion, to decide the moſt important queſtion that can be advanc'd in matter of literature, and peremptorily to define upon the point of their higheſt grandeur and perfection. For never any equall'd the ſublimity and loftineſs of Genius of thoſe two great Perſons.

This is the ſentiment of || one of the ableſt

|| *Duo illi omnis doctrinæ apices* Homerus & Virgilius. Caſaub. Præf. in Perſ.

ableſt Criticks of the later ages, who calls theſe two Authors the two Chiefs and Soveraigns of all the Sciences: not to inſiſt on the ſuffrage of two of the moſt learned and moſt judicious Princes that ever were. For ‖*Alexander*, having found *Homer's* Iliads in a Cabinet of *Darius*, after his defeat, call'd it the richeſt and moſt exquiſite work of mans wit: And *Auguſtus* made it ſufficiently appear that he had not ever eſteem'd any thing comparable to the Æneids. by the impatience he was in to ſee it during Virgil's life, and the care he took of it after his death. But not inſiſting, I ſay, on the Authority of theſe two great and ſo intelligent Princes, it may be ſaid, that there never was any merit more univerſally celebrated then that of thoſe great Genii, nor any more unanimouſly acknowledg'd: * And there hath not riſen up any one during the whole proceſs of time ſince,

‖ *Pretioſiſſimum opus animi humani.* Plin. lib. 7. c. 9.

* *Qui* Homerum *contemnunt vix illis optari quicquam ejus poteſt, quàm ut fatuitate ſuâ fruantur.* Caſaub. Diſſert. de Homero.

that durſt diſpute it, without diſhonouring himſelf, and, by ſo irrational a preſumption, betraying his inſufficiency and the weakneſſe of his endowments.

Observ. II.

How theſe two Poems are to be conſider'd in order to a Right judgement of them.

Among the Learned of the latter ages, who have pretended to give their opinions of the Poems of *Homer* and *Virgil*, and to make a parallel between them, the moſt conſiderable are *Macrobius*, *Julius Scaliger*, and *Fulvius Urſinus*. But as they have examin'd thoſe works meerly as Grammarians, ſo have they not judg'd rightly of them, having only apply'd their reflections to the externall and ſuperficial part thereof, and ſparing themſelves the trouble of penetrating to the bottome. This defect hath hindred in a manner all the

the Learned from judging rightly of them; and the prepoſſeſſion they had for *Homer* hath dazled all thoſe who pretended to the glory of being thought learned. For it is known, that they who affect the repute of being thought learned men imagine themſelves the more conſiderable, I account it an honour to declare their judgment in favour of *Homer*, and to give him the advantage over *Virgil*. And they are of opinion, that it argues a certain diſcovery of greater ſufficiency, to declare in favour of merit, which requires more capacity and attentive application to be known. And indeed as there is a greater depth of Learning requiſite to judge of *Homer* then of *Virgil*; ſo men think themſelves much diſtinguiſh'd from the common ſort, in preferring the former before the latter, and, by that means, that they acquire a reputation of ſuperiority in point of abilities, which highly ſatisfies the ſlight vanity of thoſe who make oſtentation of Science.

This is a prejudgment, which a man would do well to rid himſelfe of, how great ſoever his ability may be. For one is many times more capable of judging when he thinks himſelfe not to be ſo; nay ſometimes it is a certain aſſumption of authority for a man not to take it upon him, in as much as preſumption ordinarily deprives the mind of the liberty of judging with abſolute indifference, which is requiſite for the well doing of it. This is the party it is my deſign to take, that ſo I may not expoſe my ſelfe to prepoſſeſſion, if while I am deſirous to examine things, I took the liberty to judge of them: but I declare that I only intend to propoſe my Obſervations and Scruples, upon the works of theſe two Authors, yet ſo as to leave it to thoſe who are more excellently qualify'd than I am, to make what deciſion they pleaſe upon my Remarks.

But to enter upon the diſcuſſion of the queſtion, I ſhall not ſtick to make a previous acknowledgment, that *Ho-*

mer

mer has a much larger Ground-work to build upon, than *Virgil*; that he hath a greater extent of characters, that he deciphers things much better; that his repreſentations are more accurate; that his reflections are more moral and ſententious; that his imagination is more pregnant; that he hath a more univerſal fancy; that he is of all profeſſions, Poet, Orator, Mathematician, Philoſopher, Aſtronomer, Artizan, when he pleaſes; that he has more variety in the diſpoſition of his Fable; that he diſcovers more of that impetuoſity, which makes the elevation of the Genius; that his expreſſion is more pathetical; that he is more fortunate as to his natural inclination; that he is a Poet upon the account of his temperament; that his Verſes are fuller of pomp and magnificence; that they more delightfully fill the ear by their number and cadence, to ſuch as know the beauty of verſifying. But after all this conſider'd, it were only to judge of *Homer* and *Virgil*, only by what is moſt ſuperficial in them, as the

Grammarians do, if one ſhould frame his judgement on thoſe conſiderations, ſince there are other more eſſential things in their works to be examined.

To come then to a regular judgement of them, we muſt begin with an enquiry, what an *Epick Poem* is, what is its matter, its form, its end, and its other parts.

The *Epopœa*, ſaith || *Ariſtotle*, is an imitation, or a draught or portraiture of an illuſtrious action. It has that common with *Tragedy*; yet with this difference, that the latter imitates by repreſentation, and the former by narration. So that its matter is *Heroick action*; its form, *Fable*; its end, the *inſtruction* of *Princes* and *Grandees*.

Let us now examine the Poems of *Homer* and *Virgil*, according to theſe rules and principles; and that we may not

|| Μίμησις πράξεως. *Poet. c.* 5.

not be miſtaken, let us not look on thoſe great works by fragments; Let us not examine thoſe two Authors, by their Deſcriptions, Similitudes and Epithetes: That is onely the ſuperficial part of them; let us ſearch into what is eſſential therein, as to the deſign and execution. To do it methodically, let us reflect on the order of the parts of the *Epick Poem*, which ‖ *Ariſtotle* gives us ſome account of, to wit, *Fable*, *Manners*, *Sentiments*, and *Words*. Let us compare *Homer* and *Virgil* by thoſe Rules, and according to that order.

‖ *Poet. cap.* 5.

Obſerv. III.

The Fables of the Iliad *and the* Æneid *compar'd.*

LEt us begin with *Fable*, which is the firſt of the parts of the *Epick Poem*, and conſider that of the *Iliad*, and that of the *Æneid*, as they both ly naked without the Epiſodes or Digreſſions thereof. The

The Fable of the *Iliad* is, that one of the Chieftains of the Grecian Army being malecontent and diſguſted by the General, retires from the Camp, without hearkning to his Duty, Reaſon, or Friends; deſerts the publick intereſt and that of the State, to comply with the impetuoſity of his reſentment; he abandons himſelf to grief in a ſolitary retirement. His Enemies make their advantage of his abſence, and grow too powerful for his Party; they kill his beſt Friend; he takes up Arms again to revenge his Death; and Paſſion makes him do what Reaſon had not been able to get from him; and in fine, he kills the Head of the adverſe party. This is the Fable of the *Iliad*, abſtracting the Epiſodes, and deſpoil'd of all its Ornaments.

That of the *Æneid* is this. A Prince forc'd to fly by reaſon of the Ruine of his Country, comes to ſeek up and down the World for another eſtabliſhment; He makes his Gods and his Father the Companions of his flight. The

God

Gods, moved with that Piety of his, concern themſelves to eſtabliſh him in the nobleſt Country in the world; and he becomes the Founder of the moſt flouriſhing Empire that ever was.

Let us make a compariſon between theſe two Fables, and compute the Grandeur of the two Heroes by that of their actions. The action of *Achilles* is || pernicious to his Country, and his own Party, as *Homer* himſelf acknowledges: that of *Æneas* is advantageous and glorious: the motive of the former is a Paſſion, that of the latter, a vertue: The action of *Achilles* is the occaſion of the death of *Patroclus*, his beſt Friend; the action of *Æneas* is the occaſion of the liberty of his Gods, and that of his Father, and of the ſafety of thoſe who were with him: The one is Heroick, that is, above the ordinary vertue of Man (ſo ||*Ariſtotle* defines Heroick Vertue, in his Ethicks): The other is not ſo much as rational, and implies in it ſelf

|| ἀλαμένλω *Iliad.* 1.

ſelf a character of ferocity, which, according to the ſame *Ariſtotle*, is the vice oppoſite to Heroiſme, if we may uſe that term. For as Heroiſme is above Man, ſo its contrary is below him.

The action of *Æneas* has a more perfect end than that of *Achilles*; it puts a period to affairs by the death of *Turnus*; that of *Achilles* puts no period to them. The Siege of *Troy* laſts a whole year after *Hectors* death; which occaſioned *Quintus Calaber*, and an Egyptian named *Tryphiodorus*, Authors of no mean note, to obſerve, that the *Iliad* is imperfect, becauſe they are not terminated by *Hector's* death, but his death made an obſtacle to that termination; and conſequently, which way ſoever we look on the *Æneid*, we find, that its end is much more fortunate and fully compleat than that of the *Iliad*.

But if we be at the trouble to conſider how

‖ ὑπὲρ ἄνθρωπον.

how much Conduct, Invention, Perſpicacity, and Wit, muſt club together, in the choice of a ſubject that derives the *Romans* from the blood of the Gods, particularly *Auguſtus*, who reign'd during the Poets Life, and whom he ſo delightfully flatters with the promiſe of an Empire that was to be eternal; what beauty, what grandeur, what an inſinuation of divertiſement, what excellency do we not find in the admirable choice which *Virgil* has made? And what is there to be found comparable thereto in that of *Homer*? For as never any Author more honour'd his Country by his works than *Virgil* has done his, by attributing to the *Romans* a divine extraction, and an eternal poſterity according to the decrees of the deſtinies; ſo it may be ſaid of *Homer*, that he has diſgraced his Country, in taking for his *Hero*, a perſon who occaſioned the ‖ deſtruction of ſo many Heroes, whom he ſacrificed to his grief and diſcontent. Which gave *Plato* occaſion ſo much to blame that

‖ Πολλὰς δ' ἰφθίμους ψυχὰς Ἄϊδι προϊάψειν Ἡρώων.

that Anger of *Achilles*, the conſequences whereof were ſo prejudicial to the *Greeks*: *L' ira di* Achille, *fù con amaritudine ripreſa da* Platone: *The anger of* Achilles *was ſharply reproved by* Plato, as *Taſſo* hath obſerv'd after him in his *Opuſcula*.

Yet to excuſe *Homer*, for his having made that Paſſion the ſubject of his Poem, it may be urg'd, that the animoſities of the ancient Heroes, before the affability and meekneſs of Chriſtianity had been preach'd, was not either a weakneſs or defect, as *Taſſo* ſeems to inſinuate, in his Dialogue of vertue; *Il ſouverchio dell' ira fù attribuito a* Hercole, Achille, Aiace, *& altri Heroi. Et* Aleſſandro *per ammaeſtramento filoſofico, non pote tener laa freno, quantunche alcuna volta vinceſſe il piacere come dimoſtro doppo la morte di* Dario, *nel reſpetto portato a la moglie, e a la madre: A certain tranſcendency of* Anger *was attributed to* Hercules, Achilles, Ajax, *and other* Heroes. *And* Alexander *himſelf, notwithſtanding all his docu-*

documents of Philoſophy, could not bridle that paſſion, though ſometimes he maſter'd his concupiſcence, as he ſhewed upon the death of Darius, *in the reſpect he bore to his Wife and Mother.* But as the ſame *Plato* tells us, that Anger is not vertuous, but when it takes up Arms for the defence of Reaſon, ſo is it to be inferr'd, that that of *Achilles* was not upon any account a vertue, ſince it was far from being rational, as *Taſſo* ſayes in the ſecond Book of his *Opuſcula* : *Pare che* Homero *con la perſona di* Agamemnone *ci metta inanzi a gli occhi una figura della ragione depravata : e con quella d'* Achille *l' imagine dell' ira ſmoderata, & trapaſſante i termini preſcritti della ragione : It appears, that* Homer, *in the Perſon of* Agamemnon *ſets before our eyes an image of deprav'd reaſon; and in that of* Achilles *that of an exceſſive Anger, and ſuch as tranſcends the preſcribed bounds of reaſon.*

Thus is the Matter or Subject of *Virgil's* Poem more happy, nay, and more

more advantageous, both to himself and his Country, and consequently his choice more prudent and judicious than that of *Homer*.

OBSERV. IV.

A comparison made between the two Heroes: Achilles *and* Æneas.

THe action of *Achilles* importing somewhat more of marvellous than that of *Æneas*, in regard it is managed by him himself, without any assistance or company, and that his presence in, or absence from the army occasions all the advantages and disadvantages of his party, every one will be apt at the first sight to give it the preference. But it will not be so when a man takes the leasure to look into things more narrowly, and more strictly examines these two great Heroes. The first observation to be made in order to the clearing of the point, is that it is likely it was not *Homer*

in

intention to give us, in his Hero, the idea of a great Captain, or an accomplish'd Prince; but to shew how prejudicial discord is in any party, and so to make a draught of an action at the same time, both dreadful and miraculous. This is the opinion of *Tasso* in his Opuscula: *Per ciò fare l'idea di una terribile et maravigliosa attione.*

Wherein he did not as *Xenophon* did, who, describing his Prince, the Grand *Cyrus*, to make an absolutely accomplish'd person, confin'd himself not to the truth of things, but to the idea in general, of a compleat Prince, according to ‖ *Aristotle's* precept, who would have the Poet, in the representation and descriptions he makes, imitate, not such as are like, nor yet such as have any imperfections, but the most perfect in their kinds. And * *Plato* teaches that imitation is not to be made, but from the things that are most accomplish'd. Besides as the image, in a just and regular imitation, ought to be like the original

‖ *Poetic.* * *Leg. l. 5.*

riginal; ſo ought not this original to be any one man or Prince in particular, but the idea of a Prince or accompliſh'd Perſon in general. According to this model hath *Plato* deſcrib'd the perfect idea of a juſt man; *Xenophon*, that of a Prince; and *Cicero*, that of an Orator; by attributing to each what was moſt tranſcendent and accompliſh'd in the idea which he fram'd to himſelf thereof.

And hence it is apparent, not only that Homer followed not that maxime in framing his Hero, ſince he has made him ſubject to great weakneſſes and notorious imperfections, inſtead of inſerting into the idea, which he pretends to give of him, the conſummation of all the Vertues, according to the advertiſement of *Paul Beni* in his *Academicall Diſcourſes*: *Nel poema Heroico conviene eſprimer l'idea di perfettiſſimo Capitano: ò vero formar Heroe in cui ſia il colmo di tutte le vertù militari e ciuili. In an Heroick Poem, tis requiſite to expreſſe the idea of a moſt perfect Captain,*

tain, or to forme ſuch an Hero in whom ſhould be the height of all vertues military & civil.

And this is a very conſiderable advantage that *Virgil* had over *Homer*. For whereas the latter had not, for the making up of his Hero, any other idea then that of the Vertue of *Hercules*, *Theſeus*, or ſome other perſon of the primitive times, who were celebrated only for their ſtrength and vigour, it is no wonder if there be ſuch a defect of Morality in the Hero he hath given us, conſidering the time wherein he fram'd him: there being not then either in Hiſtory or Books any idea of moral Vertue. And whereas men knew not of any greater enemies to oppoſe, than Monſters and Wild-Beaſts, there needed only bodies and armes to pretend to the title of Hero. They knew not then that there were ſome more dangerous and terrible enemies, to wit, their paſſions and their own deſires, and moderation and juſtice were not as yet vertues much known in the world.

Thus *Virgil*, beſides the advantage he had of framing his Heros out of the two Heroes of *Homer*, that is, the valour of *Achilles*, and the prudence of *Ulyſſes*, had alſo the opportunity to adde thereto the Gallantry of *Ajax*, the wiſedome of *Neſtor*, the indefatigable patience of *Diomedes*, and the other vertues, whereof *Homer* ſets down the characters in his two Poems: to all which reuniting yet further the other vertues which he had obſerved in all other illuſtrious men, as *Themiſtocles*, *Epaminondas*, *Alexander*, *Hannibal*, *Ingurth*, and a thouſand other forreigners, as alſo in *Horatius Camillus*, *Scipio*, *Sertorius*, *Pompey*, *Caſar*, and a great number of others of his own Country. Had he not a ground-work infinitely greater to fancy to himſelf an accompliſh'd Hero than *Homer* had? Thus did the Painter *Zeuxis* finiſh that famous Picture of *Helena*, which he had undertaken, and was the admiration of his age, much more happily, and after a more compleat manner, than *Apelles* did that of *Venus*; inasmuch as *Zeuxis* fram'd his idea from all the perfecti-

ons

ons he had found in the rareſt Beauties of his time, whereas *Apelles* would frame his only from his own pure imagination, which he found to fall ſhort in the execution; ſo that he was forc'd to leave his piece imperfect, as being of opinion, that he was not able to finiſh it as he had begun it.

This inequality in the ſubject whereof I treat will appear yet much more evident, if we but take the pains to compare the pourtraicture which *Horace* hath left us of *Achilles*, with that which *Virgil* makes of *Æneas*. *Achilles* is a Bravo, but withal a haſty, impetuous, furious, paſſionate, violent, unjuſt, inexorable one, a contemner of Lawes, and one that places all his reaſon in the ſword he wears by his ſide;

‖ *Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,*
Jura negat ſibi nata, nihil non arrogat armis.

‖ *De Art Poetic.*

Beſides thoſe excellent qualities, which certainly are not very Heroick, he is cruel towards the body of *Hector*, ſo far as to take a pleaſure in exerciſing his vengeance upon it, and out of an unexampled avarice he ſells to the afflicted Father, the body of his ſon. I ſhall not ſay any thing of his quitting (with a lightneſſe not to be pardon'd) that great and generous enterpriſe made by a general combination of all *Greece*, upon the occaſion of a ſhe ſlave, for whom he abandons himſelfe to tears and complaints, with ſo many diſcoveries of weakneſſe. In fine, this Hero of *Homer*, whoſe repute is ſo great, and ſo highly celebrated through all ages, is but an epitome of imperfections and vices.

But on the contrary, *Virgil* makes a conjunction, of all the vertues to frame his: he gives him Religion towards the Gods; piety, towards his Country; tenderneſſe and friendſhip for his Relations and equity and juſtice, towards all. He is undaunted in danger,

pati-

patient in labours, courageous when occaſion requires, prudent in the management of affaires. In fine he is a good peaceful, liberal, eloquent, gentile, civill perſon; his very aire makes a certain diſcovery of grandeur and and majeſty; and that he may not be deſtitute of any one of thoſe qualifications which might contribute to the accompliſhment of a great Perſon, he is fortunate. *Ilioneus* gives *Dido* a character of him in theſe two Verſes, which may be confronted to thoſe two of *Horace*, wherein *Achilles* is deſcrib'd;

Rex erat Æneas nobis, quo juſtior alter
Nec pietate fuit, nec bello major & armis.

Theſe are the three ſoveraign qualities which make up his eſſentiall character, Religion, Iuſtice, and Valour, and which were thoſe of *Auguſtus*, whoſe pourtraicture, *Virgil* drew in the Heroes he dedicated to him, as Monſieur *de Segrais* hath well obſerv'd in the learned Preface to his Traduction of the *Æneid*:

Æneid: which is one of the moſt ſubtle and ingenious flateries that ever were: wherein happen'd to him, what ‖ *Pliny* ſaid ſomtime after with ſo much ſmartneſſe in his Panegyrick to the Emperor *Trajan*: For *Ovid* tells us that Piety was one of the eminent qualities of *Auguſtus*, who made it ſo much his care to reeſtabliſh the Temples at *Rome*:

† *Sub quo delubris ſentitur nulla ſenectus,*
Nec ſatis eſt homines, obligat ille Deos.

So that out of the vertues of *Auguſtus*, and an infinite number of perfections diſtributed and ſcattered among divers other Heroes, *Virgil* fram'd his; in as much as the true Heroick vertue is a combination of all the vertues, as *Ariſtotle* affirmes in his Ethicks. And indeed, if the *Pythagoreans* would have a Soveraigne, that he might deſerve the preheminence over others, not only to be without any defect, but alſo abſolutely accompliſh'd in and poſſeſſ'd of

‖ *Fingenti ſormantiq; Principem voto concipere ſuccurrit ſimilem huic quem videmus.* † *Faſt. l* 2.

of all the Vertues; with much more reaſon ſhould a Hero, who is the model according to which Kings ought to regulate themſelves, be a perſon of tranſcendent and conſummate vertue.

Obſerv. V.

Which of the two Heroes was moſt eminent, as to Gallantry and Valour.

Yet may we allow all theſe Obſervations, without giving the preheminence to *Æneas* For the character of Valiant, which *Homer* gives *Achilles*, which of all the characters implies moſt of the Heroick humour, makes a great ſhow, and is infinitely more accomplish'd than that which *Virgil* gives *Æneas*, and denotes and diſtinguiſhes him much better from all thoſe of his party, though all valiant. For there is nothing done without him, and he alone occaſions the good and bad fortunes of his Army.

I muſt confeſſe the valour of *Achilles* makes a greater noiſe and ſhow then that of *Æneas*, in regard it is the only Heroick quality *Homer* gives him, and by which he diſtinguiſhes him; and ſo itis the more remarkable, being alone: and in *Æneas*, being attended by many others, it is ſo much the leſſe obſervable, inaſmuch as the luſtre of it is confounded with that of all his other qualities. We find in *Achilles* only the Hero of *Homer*, but in that of *Virgil*, we have *Menelaus*, *Agamemnon*, *Ulyſſes*, *Ajax Neſtor*, *Diomedes*, and *Achilles* himſelf, if we follow *Virgil* but any thing cloſely through all the tranſactions he makes him go through in the ſecond book of Æneids

Nay it may be affirm'd, that if we can exactly diſtinguiſh between true Valour and Temerity, and ſhall have well obſerved the circumference which *Ariſtotle*, in the Ethicks attributes to the magnanimous perſon, we ſhall find that *Virgil* exalts the Valour he attributes to *Æneas* as far as it ought to

go;

go; but we muſt take the leiſure to make an attentive reflection thereon, to find that character in him, and ought not to ſuffer any of all the circumſtances, wherewith he endeavours to prepoſſeſſe our minds, to eſcape our obſervance.

In the firſt place he brings in *Æneas* advertis'd by *Hector*, who appears to him after his death, that the *Greeks* have ſupriz'd *Troy*, that they are Maſters of it, and that its deſtiny is to be deſtroy'd. This advertiſement coming from a deceas'd perſon, Religion renders his teſtimony ſacred; and to take him off from all endeavours to defend it, he aſſures him, that he had done the utmoſt he could by his courage;

Sat patriæ Priamoq; datum eſt ——

He might have contented himſelf with that, being inform'd by ſo ſacred a teſtimony of the will of the Gods; but waken'd by the noiſe of the ſacking of the City, and the conflagration of the

the neighbouring houſes; he goes up himſelfe to the top of his houſe to diſcover the cauſe of that noiſe and diſorder; and his apprehenſions prompt him to take armes, and die for his Country;

——*Pulchrumq; mori ſuccurrit in armis.*

The danger ſtartles him not, though he were alone at his going forth arm'd out of his houſe. Without conſulting his own people he runs to the place where the tumult was, the confuſion of a ſurpriz'd City, and the moſt preſſing exigency, that could be, call him away;

In flammas & in arma feror ——

Having in his way met with *Chorœbus*, *Dymas*, and *Hypanis*, with ſome others whom he knew, he leads them on, and animates them by his example;

Moriamur & in media arma ruamus —

He

He with his own hands kills *Androgeos*, one of the moſt forward of the enemies Commanders; he makes a great ſlaughter of the *Greeks*, with a handful of his own people; he and they take up the arms of the ſlain to diſguiſe themſelves; which proved ſo ſucceſſful, that he forc'd ſome out of the City, and purſues them flying, quite to their ſhips;

Diffugiunt alii ad naves, & littora curſu
Fida petunt——

But oreprefs'd by number, *Dymas*, *Hypanis*, and his other friends, being killed by his ſides, he runs to the Palace, where the danger was greateſt, and attaques it with all his might, in hopes to reſcue the King and all of the Royal Family;

Inſtaurati animi Regis ſuccurere tectis.

He comes thither too late, the *Greeks* had put all within it to the ſword, and, being the only perſon left of his party *Jamq;*

Jamq; adeo super unus eram ——

and finding himself deserted by all, there being not any thing left in the Palace, that might occasion his stay, after he had seen the King, the Queen, and her Daughters slaughter'd, he runs to his own house, to spend his own life, in defending that of his Father. But his mother *Venus* stops him in his way, and opens his eyes to let him see, that it is against the Gods he thinks to fight, and that they are the destroyers of *Troy*, and not only the *Greeks*;

——*Mixtoque undantem pulvere fumum*
Neptunus muros, magnoq; emota tridenti
Fundamenta quatit; totamq; a sedibus urbē
Eruit. Hic Juno *Scæas sævissima portas*
Prima tenet, sociumq; vocans a navibus agmen.
Ferro accincta vocat —— &c.

Jupiter and *Pallas* are also against him. So that *Æneas*, who saw them, might have contented himself, without pursuing

purſuing things any further; it had been an impiety, and not a mark of valour to ſtand out longer againſt ſo many Gods combin'd together. Yet being come to his houſe, which he did only in order to the defence of his Fathers life, though with the loſs of his own, and perceiving he would not ſurvive the deſtruction of his Country, he arms once more at leaſt, to go and court a glorious death;

Hic ferro accingor rurſus ——

And there muſt be Prodigies from Heaven, and advertiſements from the Gods themſelves, ere he will be diverted;

—— *Subitoque fragore*
Intonuit lævum, &c. ——

Anchiſes himſelf is the interpreter of them, and *Æneas* could not ſubmit to any thing but that;

Ceſſi, & ſublato montem genitore petivi.

'Tis

Tis not to Men, but to the Gods only that he yeilds; I am in doubt, whether Gallantry can be advanc'd any higher; and yet this is but the beginning, and the firſt eſſay of that of *Æneas*: all the courageous actions he performs in the ſequel of the *Æneid* bear the character of his valour: which will appear miraculous even in theſe times, wherein that excellent name is without any diſtinction beſtowed on the moſt temerarious ſallies and eruptions of fury and brutality.

From theſe obſervations it will be no hard matter to judge, which of the two Heroes, *Achilles* and *Æneas* is the moſt compleat and accompliſh'd; which is one of the moſt eſſential parts of the Poem. I come to the ſecond, which is the diſpoſition of the Fable.

Observation VI.

Of the diſpoſition of the fabulous part of the two Poems.

The diſpoſition or diſtribution of the Fable conſiſts in three things, to wit, the natural deduction or conſequence of the principal action, and all the matters which compoſe it; an exact intermixture of what is probable and what miraculous; and the marſhalling and correſpondence of the Epiſodes or Digreſſions, with the principal action. Theſe three qualities, which comprehend the diſtribution of the Fable, by *Ariſtotle*, called the ‖ *Conſtitution of the things* are ſo eſſential to the Poem, that it cannot be abſolutely compleat without them.

The firſt is the Action, which ought to be entire, and perfect, according to the advice of *Ariſtotle*: that is to

‖ σύνθεσις τῶν πραγμάτων.

ſay, as he explains it, ſuch as hath a beginning, a middle, and an end. *Horace* would have theſe parts to have a certain proportion and connexion among themſelves;

Primo nè nedium, medio ne diſcrepet imum

And theſe are the obſervations which may be made upon our Poems as to this point. If the action and principal ſubject of the Iliad be the war of *Troy*, according to the ſentiment of ‖ *Horace*, a great Maſter in that Art, who calls *Homer Trojani belli Scriptorem*, and that of many others; that action is defective and imperfect, for that war has not, in the *Iliad*, either beginning or end; and it would be as it were a Statue which ſhould have neither head nor foot. So that we might apply to that work this verſe of *Horace*;

† *Infelix operis ſummâ, qui ponere totum*
Neſciat——

But

‖ *Ad Loll. l.* 1. *Ep.* 11. † *Ad Piſon.*

But if it be the anger of *Achilles*, as it is more likely, and as *Homer* himſelf acknowledges by his propoſition; that anger has indeed a beginning, but it has neither end, nor middle: for it is thruſt out of doors by another animoſity of the ſame perſon againſt *Hector* for the death of *Patroclus*. So that there are two angers, one upon the loſſe of his Friend, the other upon their taking away of his Miſtreſſe. But the greateſt defect is, that the reſt of the Poem has no connection with that anger; and *Homer*, during the ſpace of eighteen books, thinks no more of it, as if he had clearly forgot his propoſition and deſigne, which like a ſtarre ſhould regulate the courſe of it, or be as it were a Compaſſe which a man cannot have out of his ſight but he muſt deviate. During that long intervall he ſpeaks only of ſieges, battells, ſurpriſes, conſultations of the Gods, and all relates to the ſiege of *Troy*. Which occaſion'd *Horace's* being of opinion, that the ſubject of the Iliad is the war of *Troy*, according

to the very name it goes under. And ſo which way ſoever we look on that Poem, it will appeare defective in that part

Nor is the *Odyſſey* an action, any way more perfect than that of the *Iliad*. It begins with the voyages of *Telemachus* and ends with thoſe of *Vlyſſes*. All is made for *Telemachus* in the four firſt books; *Menelaus*, *Neſtor* and the other *Grecian* Princes relate to him the adventures of *Troy*; all relate to that, there's no thought at all of *Vlyſſes*; which made *Paul Beni* affirme in his *Academical Diſcourſes* upon *Homer* and *Virgil*, that the Fable of the *Odyſſes* is clearly double; *E chiaramente provato che l'Odiſſea contenga due peregrinationi, e in ſomma ſia di doppia favola.* Not that I abſolutely allow it to be ſo; yet I ſtick not to pretend, that it is hard to find therein the principal action very regularly carried on, and according to the proportions requir'd by *Horace*, in the forementioned precept for the natural connection of the parts.

parts. Nay this very voyage of *Telemachus* bears not any proportion to that of *Vlysses*, which is the principal action. It contributes nothing at all, nay not so much as to minister any occasion for his returne, which is brought about by the disposition of *Iupiter* and the assistance of the *Phenicians*. Which made *Beni* say, that the four first books of the *Odyssey* are neither Episode nor part of action, nor have any connection with the rest of the work. Take them as they are, one knows not what to make of them.

The *Æneid*, methinks, is not chargeable with that defect. *Æneas* leaves *Phrygia*, makes his voyages, and settles himself in *Italy*; all is consequent in that designe, and all relates to the establishment of a new Empire, which is the true subject of the Poem. And *Virgil* prosecutes it to the design'd mark without digressing to what hath no relation thereto.

Semper ad eventum festinat, & in medias

Non ſecus ac notas auditorem rapit — Hor.

He is alſo more happy than *Homer* in the diſtribution of the particular matters and occurrences which relate to the general Diſpoſition of his Poem.

And it is this diſtribution and this diſpoſition of things which makes that admirable regularity, and that proportion; wherein alone conſiſts the perfection of a great work, which is neither beautiful nor compleat any further then there is that correſpondence between its parts. Which occaſion'd *Beni's* obſervation in his *Academical diſcourſes*, That the perfection of a Poem ought not to be computed by the beauty of one, or ſeveral parts, but by all together: *Non dee ſtimarſi l' excellenza del Poema da una ſola circoſtanza o parle, ma da tutte inſieme.*

This regular proportion of the parts, and the exact rapport there ought to be between them, ſeems to be incompara-

parably better obſerv'd in the *Æneid*, than the *Iliad*; for there, every thing is introduc'd in its order and place, and no man ever better follow'd that diſtribution of matters, and that ſeries of events then *Virgil* has done. Thence *Horace* recommends it above all things to the poet,

‖*Vt jam nunc dicat, jam nunc debẽtia dici.*

inſinuating that all the excellency and perfection of a work conſiſts in that order; adding

* *Ordinis hæc virtus erit, & venus* —

in regard the grace and divertive ſatisfaction in a work cannot proceed from any thing but that diſtribution.

And not to dilate here, upon what may be particularly and minutely obſerv'd therein, I ſhall only make a tranſient compariſon between the games or divertiſements, which *Achilles* makes in the 23. book of the *Iliads* upon

‖ *Ad Piſon.* * *Ibid.*

the death of *Patroclus*, and thoſe which *Æneas* makes for the Apotheoſis of *Anchiſes* in the 5. of the *Æneids*.

Games may be numbred among thoſe actions which may occurre in the lives of Heroes, and be ſo introduc'd into the matters of the *Heroick* Poem, in regard they are occaſions of magnificence, which is one of the qualities that make up the Hero. *Virgil* makes his in the V. of his *Æneids*, firſt to divert the imagination of his Reader from the mournfull object of *Dido's* death, which he had repreſented in the fourth book, and which had ſomething of ſavagenesſe in it; ſecondly to divert himſelf by the diverting of his Hero; and theſe are of thoſe ſorts of pleaſures, which, to be receiv'd well ought to come in, in their place.

|| *Ne ſpiſſæ riſum tollant impunè coronæ.*

If *Virgil* had not plac'd his Games well in the ſecond or third book; it had been

|| *Horat. ad Piſon.*

been to take breath too ſoon, as *Homer* does it too late in the 23. of the Iliad. The time is elaps'd; 'tis unſeaſonable; people are quite tir'd out; he ſhould not have amus'd himſelf being ſo neer the cloze of it. 'Twere much at one, as if a Traveller earneſtly deſirous to returne from the *Indies* to *Paris*, after he had ſpent two years in his voyage, ſhould trifle away a whole month at *Dieppe*, in playing at tick-tack, or ſeeing playes. This would argue a ſtrange want of judgment. And this we muſt ſeriouſly ſay of *Homer*, that he might have been more ſerious towards the end of his work, and in all likelihood he ought to have been a little weary, and not have diverted from making up to his final ſtage, being got ſo neer it. There are abundance of things utterly incredible in the repreſentation of thoſe Games. The Surveyors or Judges make diſcourſes in them, which tire out and exhauſt the patience of the Readers.

The ſecond part of the Diſpoſition which

which is the juſt intermixture and attemperation of what is miraculous with what is probable, is alſo eſſentiall to the Epick Poem, which ought to have ſomewhat admirable in it, to move the hearts of Grandees for whom it is writ, that they may be animated to great things: but with this caution, that it ought alſo to be probable, ſo to avoid giving an abſolute check to their emulation, and in fine running them into deſpair. Truth it ſelf which the Hiſtorian ought ſtrictly to enquire into, being ſometimes too ſtrong to be imitated, is not alwayes ſo convenient to be the matter of the Epick Poem, as Probability, which has a greater proportion to things than men are wont to make. For example the action of *Sampſon*, who defeated the *Philiſtins* with the jaw bone of an aſſe, is an Heroick action; yet can it not be the ſubject of an Epick Poem. For though it bee true, yet is it not likely to be ſo; and conſequently it is too miraculous to be propos'd for imitation; we are therefore to avoid

that

that exceſſe by a juſt attemperation of probability, without which all becomes fabulous and incredible, and makes no impreſſion on mens hearts, which cannot endure to be mov'd at any thing but what ſeems poſſible to them.

Let us ſee whether *Homer* hath been more fortunate in the obſervance of this Rule, than of that I ſpoke of laſt. He inſiſts ſo little on the probable part, and ſo far expatiates in the miraculous, out of an exceſſive earneſtneſſe to be alwayes thought admirable and to hurry mens minds along with him, that he does not leave any thing to be done by reaſon, or paſſion, nor indeed by nature; all is done by machines and engines. If *Priamus* hath loſt Hector, there is a neceſſity of *Jupiter's* ſending the Goddeſſe *Iris*, his Meſſenger, to give him an advertiſement that he ſhould take a care of his Sons body, and redeem it from *Achilles*. Could not his Father, who had ſo great a tenderneſs for his Son, and was ſo ſuperſtitious to obſerve the ceremonies perform'd at

at funeralls, and was ſo loath that precious *depoſitum* ſhould be left to the mercy of the birds, think of it himſelf? There muſt be a machine to put him in mind that he is a Father.

If *Telemachus* in the *Odyſſey* go to find out *Vlyſſes* in the Courtes of *Greece* he cannot ſtir a foot forwards without the aſſiſtance of *Minerva*, ſhe is his guide wherever he goes, his remembrancer of all things; he does not do or think of any thing himſelf, he is a great child, whom a Governeſſe leads up and down, by the ſleeves. Should not honour, duty, nature have mov'd his heart, and have rais'd a litle diſquiet in him for an abſent Father, and that near the ſpace of eighteen years, but there muſt be a neceſſity of another's help and a recourſe to the machine? Nay this very machine hath not any appearance of probability, in as much as *Minerva* conducts *Telemachus* to ſeek for *Vlyſſes* all over *Greece*, ſave only to the place where he is, which ſhe ought not to have been ignorant of,

upon

upon the ſcore of her Divinity, from which nothing ſhould be conceald.

And yet this is *Homer*'s method, who to be alwayes vaulting and jumping, that he might be every where the more wondred at, would do all things by extraordinary waies. It may be ſaid, that he makes his Gods ſuch as are to be daily Employ'd, and orders them, as thoſe among the Comedians who are to act any part. *Mercury* becomes Coachman to *Priamus*, to carry him to *Achilles*, to demand the body of his Son; and leaſt he ſhould be expoſ'd to the Scouts in his way to the *Grecian* campe, *Iupiter* makes uſe of the ſame *Mercury*, and his Miniſtery, to ſet them aſleep: and to prepare *Achilles's* heart by ſome ſentiment of compaſſion, *Thetis*, his mother, muſt go and prevent him, and diſpoſe him thereto by *Jupiter*'s order. In fine the ‖Gods are employ'd to do all things; there's no regard had of their rank, nor the peace and tranquillity of their

‖ *Per ambages Deorumq; miniſteria.*

their condition. They are ſo many Galley-ſlaves to be put upon any work.

This is not the aire of *Virgil*, who ſo religiouſly obſerves what *Horace* hath ſince adviſ'd, that the Gods be not brought into the action, if the thing do not deſerve it.

Nec Deus interſit, niſi dignus vindice nodus
Incideʳit ——

And thus does that judicious Poet introduce *Mercury* in the fourth of the *Æneids*, to ſatisfy *Æneas*, who was in a terrible perplexity. The promiſe he had made to *Dido* detains him at *Carthage*; the deſtinie of his Son, and that Empire of the whole world promiſ'd by the Gods, preſſe his departure thence. He is troubled on the one ſide to be chargeable with a defect of fidelity towards *Dido*, and on the other, of ſubmiſſion to the Gods. There muſt come another from above and it muſt be

‖ *Art. Poet.*

be ſome ſuperiour power to deliver him out of ſo ſtrange a trouble. There is a neceſſity that a God ſhould ſpeak to ſurmount his difficulty and break that engagement. *Mercury* does it

The ſame may be ſaid of the adventure of *Æneas* in the firſt of the *Æneids*. 'Tis not a ſhepherd or a huntſman that ſerves him for a guide, in the wandring condition he was in, which was naturall enough; but *Venus* appears to him, acquaints him what Country he is in, and with the adventure of his companions, whom he thought loſt, and ſhews him the wayes. For ſuch was the conjuncture of things then, that it was neceſſary it ſhould be a Divinity to raiſe up *Æneas's* courage who had ſuffer'd extreamly in a dreadful tempeſt, who had ſeen ſome ſhips of his Fleet caſt away, and had been forc'd by the ſtorm upon a deſert ſhore, deſtitute of all humane relief and reduc'd almoſt to deſpair. It was fit the Poet ſhould not leave him in that extremity: nay it was likely the Gods

ought

ought in ſome meaſure to concerne themſelves for him, ſince his piety made him ſo careful of their intereſt, and ſince they were the companions of his exile and flight; and decorum requir'd that it ſhould be his Mother who appear'd in it, and ſhould make it her buſineſſe to encourage him, eſpecially after ſhe had been inform'd by *Jupiter* of his deſtiny.

Moreover, beſides that all theſe machines and contrivances of *Virgil* are more grounded in reaſon and likelihood than thoſe of *Homer*; you will find them leſſe frequent, and leſſe forc'd, if you take the leaſure to examine them one after another. Nay the very management of the Miniſtery of the Gods is much more ſuitable to their rank and condition, and incomparably more judicious in *Virgil* then in *Homer*, whom for that reaſon, *Dion Chryſoſtome* calls the ‖*greateſt impoſtor in the world, and that in the things moſt hard to believe.*

We

‖ κακιστὸν ἀπατεῶνα.

We may adde further, according to *Tasso's* remark in his Opuscula, that *Virgil* had the happiness to embellish his Poem with a kind of the miraculous part, which *Homer* notwithstanding all his affectation to find out such matter, never thought of: which is to bestow valor on Women, and to make them fight, as *Camilla* does in the eleaventh book, and that so effectually, which is a very great ornament of the *Æneid.* Thus speaks Tasso of it: *Niuna cosa par pui maravigliosa della fortezza feminile: Virgilio occupo questa parte, della quale Homero s'era dimenticato. Nothing seems more admirable than feminine fortitude;* Virgil *was master of this part, wherein* Homer *was wanting*: after the observation of *Dion Chrysostome*, who had observ'd it in his Discourse of the affaires of *Troy.*

The third part of of the || Disposition is the intermixture of the Episodes with the principall Action. The Episode

πρᾶγμα πράγματι συναπτόμενον, Pollux.

ſode is a kind of Digreſſion from the Subject; and conſequently it ought || not to be long, if there be a right obſervance of the proportions. It ought not to be forc'd, violently brought in, nor drawn from far, and ſo betray its diſaffinity to the ſubject; in fine it ought not to be too frequent, that it may not occaſion a confuſion of matters. *Homer* begins his Odyſſey, which is his more perfect Poem, by an Epiſode of four Books; he recedes from his ſubject e're he was well gotten into it, and to make a regular ſtructure he begins with a piece not ſuitable to the workes, according to the obſervation I have already made of it

Has *Virgil* any ſuch thing in his Epiſodes, which are ſo admirably proportionable to the ſubject, as is that of *Pallas* and *Evander*, that of *Niſus* and *Euryalus*, that of *Camilla* and others? Nay that of *Dido* which is the greateſt and largeſt of them all, never excludes the perſon of the *Hero* but

|| ἐξαίσιον πρᾶγμα. Suidas.

but it is he that ſpakes, and relates his own adventures: if he recedes ought from his ſubject, he ſtill makes frequent returns upon himſelf; a thing not to be found in the *Illiad* or *Odyſſey*. *Achilles* and *Vlyſſes*, who are the Heroes celebrated in them, are quite out of ſight for the ſpace of ſeveral books, and a man may travel a great way ere he can meet with them.

I leave it to thoſe who can better ſpare leiſure, to examine, whether the Epiſodes of *Homer* are not more forc'd and leſſe natural than thoſe of *Virgil*. What reference has the wound which *Mars* received from *Diomedes* to the anger of *Achilles*? *Homer* expatiates upon that adventure in the fifth of the *Iliads*; *Mars* crying like a child and makes his complaint to *Jupiter*, who unkindly entertains him with bitter railleries. However, to try all wayes, they think fit to ſend for *Pæon*, the Phyſician of the Gods to cure him: The Goddeſs *Hebe* concernes her ſelfe for him. The poet, who thinks the paſſage

pleaſant, proſecutes it with might and maine. He deſcends to obſcenity, and would bee pittied, were it not for the reſpect wherewith men are poſſeſſ'd for the grandeur of his Genius.

But to forbeare being too particular, which would be an endleſſework we may ſay *Virgil* never recedes from his ſubject, Homer is for the moſt part at a diſtance from his; and by the multiplicity and great traine of his Epiſodes, he is continually hurried away with the impetuoſity and intemperance of his imaginations, which he followes without any diſcretion or choice. He may be compar'd to thoſe Travellors, who have a great journey to go, yet every thing ſtops and amuſes them. There is not a good blow given with a ſword in the heat of an engagement., but he muſt take occaſion thence to tell ſtories and derive genealogies.

Observ. VII.

Of Manners

MOrality, or Maners, ought to follow the Diſpoſition of the Fable, according to *Ariſtotles* deſign. It is the third quality of the Poem, and it is not ſo much the morality of the Poet himſelf that is to be underſtood by theſe Manners, as that of the Actors and Perſons who are to enter into the action. What a vaſt difference ſhall we find, as to this point, between our two admirable Poets? In *Homer*, Kings and Princes ſpeak as ſcurrilouſly one of another as Porters would do. *Agamemnon*, in the *Iliad*, treats *Chryſes* the high Prieſt, as an extravagant and impious perſon, when he only demands, with much reſpect, nay with preſents, his own Daughter, which he had taken away from him. He told him, that he had no regard at all to the external marks of his Prieſtood, whereby he ought to have gain'd his reſpect. Nor

does that prieſt ſpeake afterwards like a good and vertuous man in the prayer he makes to *Apollo*, wherein he deſires him to deſtroy the *Greeks*, that his reſentment might be reveng d. That is ſomewhat uncharitable, litle beſeeming him, whoſe office it was to pray for the people, and the preſervation of the ſtate, according to his function of high-Prieſt.

Achilles, in the nineteenth of the *Iliads* goes to his Mother *Thetis*, to make her ſenſible of the fear he was in, that the flies might injure the body of his friend *Patroclus*, then newly kill'd, and enter into his wounds, which might breed corruption, ſuch as might render the body moſt deformed. Is the ſame zeal againſt the flies a thing beſeeming a Hero? And is he not an excellent Poet who employes a *Divinity* to drive them away?

Vlyſſes, whom *Homer* propoſes as an exemplar of wiſdome, ſuffers himſelf to be made drunk by the *Pheacians*, for

for which *Ariſtotle* and *Philoſtratus* blame that Poet. But what extravagance was it in that accompliſh'd Sage, ſo ſoon to forget his wife, a women ſo vertuous as ſhe was, and his Son who was ſo dear to him, to ſquander away ſo long a time in the dalliances of his Proſtitute *Calypſo*, and to run after the famous Sorceres *Circe*, and being a King, as he was, to abaſe himſelfe ſo far as to go to fiſty-cuffes with a pitiful raſkally beggar named *Irus*? *Priamus*, in the 24 of the Iliad, does not ſpeak like a Father at all; he cruelly all treats his other children, to expreſſe his griefe for the death of *Hector*. He wiſhes them all dead, ſo *Hector* were but alive again. His affliction might have been expreſſ'd ſome other way.

I ſay nothing of the inhumanity of *Achilles* upon the body *Hector*, after his death, but only cite what *Cicero* ſayes of it *Trahit Hectorem ad carrum religatum Achilles lacerari eum et ſentire, credo, putat, et ulciſcitur, ut ſibi*

‖ *Tuſc. Qu. ſt. l. 1.*

videtur. Achilles, ſaith he, *drags Hector being faſten'd to a chariot, I ſuppoſe he conceives that he was torn and ſenſible of that treatment, and thinks that he is thereby reveng'd.* This pleaſure is not very Heroick. The accidentall interview between *Vlyſſes* and the daughter of *Alcinous* in the 6. of Odyſſeys is clearly againſt the rules of decency; and that Princeſſe forgets her own modeſty to give too long an audience to his compaſſion or curioſity.

In fine there is but litle obſervance of Decorum in *Homers* poems: Fat hers are therein harſh and cruell, the Heroes weak and paſſionate, the Gods ſubject to miſeries, unquiet, quarrellſome, and not enduring one another; there being not yet any thing of that Stoick Philoſophy, which *Zeno* and his followers taught men ſince, to make them more rationall and perfect than the Gods of the *Iliads* and *Odyſſeys*: whereas in *Virgil*, every thing obſerves its proper character. *Drances* and *Turnus* quarrel there, but as perſons of quality.

quality. The paſſion between *Æneas* and *Dido* is indeed purſu'd to the greateſt extremity; yet is there not any violation of modeſty, or of the rules of external decorum: nay the Gods themſelues are people of quality and good repute; and whatever is eſſential as to devoir or decency is therein moſt religiouſly obſerv'd. For *Virgil* had follow'd that admirable model which he had found in *Terence*, of whom ‖*Varro* ſaies, that he had, as to morality and good manners, borne the advantage over *Cecilius* and *Plautus* who had bee eminent for other talents.

But we muſt pardon this weakneſſe in *Homer*, who writ in a time when Morality was hardly come to any perfection; the world was yet too young to be imbu'd with principles of modeſty and decorum. Morality was more accompliſh'd and better known in *Virgils* time, in whom it was much more cultivated than in *Homer's*. For *Virgil* could not

‖ *In argumentis Cæcilius palmam poſcit, in ſermonibus Plautus, in moribus Terentius.*

not himſelf ſmother his ſentiment as to the injuſtice of the civil war; though it had occaſion'd the eſtabliſhment of the Empire, and that of *Auguſtus*'s fortune. He could not approve it, and as if his heart had been republicane even in Monarchy, he condemnes it, but with the greateſt caution and tenderneſſe imaginable, by cajolling even *Cæſar* himſelfe, who was the Author thereof;

Tuq; prior, Tu parce, genus qui ducis Olympo
Projice tela manu ſanguis meus! ——

So full was his Morality of honour and uprightneſſe, and ſo oppoſite to that ſpirit of flattery, which that of Monarchy began to countenance.

Obſerv. VIII.

Of Sentiments.

THe Sentiments, which are the fourth qualification of the Poem, have ſo great a reference to Manners that the principles of the one are thoſe alſo of the

the other. Nay it may be ſaid, that the ſentiments are in effect, but only the expreſſions of the Manners. It is not therfore to be admir'd, if *Virgil* have that advantage over *Homer*, ſince he had, after ſo ſingular a manner, that of the Manners. He has that obligation to the age wherein he writ, the ſpirit and humour whereof was much more juſt and polite than that of *Homer*, who made it not ſo much his buſineſſe to think well, as to ſpeak well: for his ſentiments are never ſo excellent as his diſcourſes. And therefore I ſhall not ſtand to make a long parallel between them, but only a particular obſervation of ſome of the ſentiments which *Homer* attributes to his Heroes, whence a judgement may be fram'd of the reſt. *Agamemnon*, in the firſt of the Iliads, ſaies, that the reaſon obliging him to retaine *Chryſeis*, is, that he has a greater affection and eſteem for her than for *Clytemneſtra*. A very kind Huſband! to preferre a ſtranger before a Princeſſe, who was his Wife, and a well deſerving perſon.

Neſtor

Neſtor, in the 9 of the Iliads, tells *Agamemnon*, who deſires his advice upon the diſtraction of affaires, by reaſon of the abſence of *Achilles*, that he will give him an incomparable counſell, and that never any perſon ſince the beginning of the world, hath given any that was more prudent and more excellent. The good man reads a lecture full of oſtentation upon the chapter of Prudence; and indeed conſidering his reputation of being ſo wiſe a man, he might have been more modeſt and reſerv'd. Yet is not the counſell he gives him of ſo great account, ſince it amounted only to this, that *Achilles* ſhould be appeas'd, ſatiſfy'd, and by plauſible inſinuations, oblig'd to return to the *Army*. This argu'd not any great reach of policy; a perſon of ordinary endowments might have given that counſel.

Antilochus, his Son, in the 23. of the Iliads, ſpeaks to his Horſes, enters into a formal diſcourſe with them, and conjures them to do their utmoſt to get the better

better of *Menelaus* and *Diomedes*, in the courſe which was to be run at the Games, celebrated upon occaſion of the death of *Patroclus*. He excites them with the moſt preſſing earneſtneſſe of diſcourſe imaginable; yet with very childiſh reaſons, telling them that his Father, *Neſtor*, will turne them out of his ſervice, or get their throats cut, if they do not as they ſhould do: in fine, he becomes a pathetick Orator to brute beaſts.

True it is, that *Plutarch*, in the diſcourſe he made upon *Homer*, excuſes him for the liberty he took to make *Antilochus*, in that paſſage, as alſo *Hector* in another, ſpeak to their horſes, upon the ſcore of his opinion of the tranſmigration of ſoules, which he had taken from *Phythagoras*; But I referre my ſelf to that philoſophy, whether it renders beaſts leſſe beaſts than they were, and more capable of hearkening to reaſon.

Jupiter tells *Mars*, in the fifth of the *Iliads*

Iliads, after *Diomedes* had wounded him, that he could not endure him, that he deſerv'd the miſſortune which had happen'd to him, for haveing comply'd too far with the counſells of his Mother *Iuno*, whoſe humour was intractable. What kindneſſes were theſe in the Prince of the Gods, towards his wife? What conſolation to his Son *Mars* who was then newly wounded? We ſhould never come to an end, if we minutely remark'd all. Beſides that, *Virgil* is not ſubject to thoſe weakneſſes, he is alwayes ſerious, alwayes great, alwayes ſoaring on high, to keep up the Heroick Character: He does not abaſe himſelf to act the pleaſant droll, nor fall down to a childiſh familiarity, contrary to the decorum of his rank, from which *Homer* many times degrades himſelf. This latter puts off that air of Majeſty, which ought to be annex'd to his character; he ever and anon falls into fooliſh freaks, by degenerating to the familiar way of talking, and turning things to an aire of divertisment: as when, in the 8. of

Odyſſeys,

Odyſſeys. he entertains the Gods at a Comedy, ſome of whom he makes Bouffoons, by introducing *Mars* and *Venus* ſurpriz'd in the nets lay'd for them by *Vulcan.* The battell between *Irus* and *Ulyſſes*, in the 18. book ſavours ſtrongly of the Burlesque humour, as do alſo the character of *Therſitis*, and the wounding of *Venus* in the Iliad. But to do Homer all the right he deſerves, we may juſtly affirm, that that weakneſſe is not ſo much to be attributed to him, as to the age he liv'd in, which was not capable of any greater politeneſſe

OBSERV. IX.

Of Words.

THe ſentiments are the expreſſion of the words, and the words that of the Manners. In this part, which is the fifth, according to *Ariſtotle's* order, *Homer* triumphs, and is moſt accompliſh'd There is no conteſting with him as to

to this advantage, which he has over all the other Poets, in ſuch a manner as cannot ſufficiently be expreſſ'd. Twas alſo this admirable talent of wording well, that made *Sophocles*, who paſſes for the model of Tragedy, his perpetuall admirer and moſt exact imitator: which gave the Critickes occaſion to call him ‖ *The great Lover of Homer*. *Plato*, for the ſame reaſon, in the 10. book of his Republick, calls him the Prince of Heroick Poets. *Pindar*, in the 7. Ode of the *Nemæan* Games, does not commend and admire him, upon any other account, than that of the loftineſſe of his diſcourſe. And *Longinus* propoſes him in his † Treatiſe, as the moſt accompliſh'd idea of a majeſtick ſtile.

In fine it may be ſaid, that it is upon this qualification he hath impoſed upon all *Antiquity*; and that the elegance and excellency of his words and expreſſions was the charme and enchantment, whereby he merited the admiration

‖ φιλόμηρον. † Περὶ ὕψους.

admiration of all thoſe who have had any acquaintance with literature, and that he hath engroſſ'd to himſelfe the eſteem and conſideration of all the Learned. For whereas the diverſion and luſtre of Poeſy conſiſts only in its expreſſion, which is alwayes in a manner the moſt remarkable part of its beauty, *Homer*, who hath excelled all Poets in the riches, elegance, and grandeure of his, hath thereby merited, among the ableſt perſons, that admiration which all ages have had for him. Twas this that put *Pindar*, whom *Horace* propoſes to himſelf for a model, and all the *Greek* Lyricks, into a deſpaire of ever attaining the majeſty of *Homer's* verſes; *Pindarus novemq; Lyrici Homericis verſibus canere timuerunt.* And *Paterculus* hath this commendation of him in the firſt book of his Hiſtory, *Fulgore carminum ſolus Poeta appellari meruit*; and a litle after, *molliſſimâ dulcedine carminum memorabilis.*

Twas for this admirable advantage,

that *Lycurgus* made so great ostentation of his Poesy, in the Oration he made against *Leocrates*; That *Æschylus* saies, in *Plutarch* and *Athenæus*, that his Tragedies are but the crums of *Homer's* great banquets; That *Plato* affirms him to be the most accomplish'd and most divine of all the Poets; That *Aristides* saies in the third Tome of his *Orations*, that no man ever spoke better; That *Aristotle*, in his Treatise of Poesy said, that he transcends all other in the height and grandeur of his expressions. *Socrates*, in one of his Epistles to *Xenophon*; *Xenophon* himself, in his *Banquet*; *Democritus* in *Dion Chrysostome*, *Aristophanes*, in the *Froggs*; *Hierocles*, in his Fragments preserv'd by *Stobæus*. *Hermogenes*, in his Ideas; *Philostratus*, in his Heroick Images, *Theocritus*, in his 16. Idyll; *Moschus*, in his third; *Plutarch*, in the Discourse he made upon *Homer*; *Dionysius Halicarnassæus*, in the Construction of names; *Iamblichus*, in the life of *Pythagoras*; *Origen* against *Celsus*, lib. 7. *Thucydides*, in the funeral Oration of *Pericles*; *Maximus Tyrius*,

Tyrius, in his 16. Diſſertation; *Lucian*, in the elogy of *Demoſthenes*; *Themiſtius*, in his 16. Oration; *Theodoret* in the ſecond Book *de curandis affectibus Græc.* and abundance of others do all affirme the ſame thing.

But all theſe great perſons, whom I have named, gave *Homer* theſe eloges, only upon the ſcore of the beauty and luſter of his Diſcourſe, for which he cannot be ſufficiently commended. And it muſt be acknowledg'd, that, upon this advantage, which he hath in an eminent manner, he deſerves to be preferrd before *Virgil*; though *Virgil* be the moſt prudent, the moſt diſcreet, and the moſt judicious of all thoſe that ever writ.

Observ. X.

Reflections upon the Expreſſion of Homer *and* Virgil.

YEt is there ſtill ſomewhat to be further remark'd upon this expreſſion of *Homer*, the luſter whereof hath ſo highly merited the eſteem and applauſe even of all Antiquity.

Tranſitions, which, upon the account of their character, ought to be very much varied, for the greater divertiſement of the Reader, are much alike, in the greateſt part of his work. We cannot reckon up above twenty or thirty ſorts in the whole extent of neere thirty thouſand verſes: and conſequently one and the ſame connection, preſenting it ſelfe ordinarily, is very apt to give diſguſt, by ſo frequent a repetition: which gave *Martial* occaſion to make a little ſport at the ἢ δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος and to ſay, that the *Latine* Muſes

Muſes are not ſo light and ſuch libertines us the Grecian;

Qui Muſas colimus ſeveriores.

The compariſons, in the ſame work, are flat, forc'd, not very natural in ſome paſſages, never very excellent, though, in ſo great a number as there are of them, it is impoſſible but there ſhould be ſome pertinent and ſuitable enough: I ſhall ſay nothing of that which is grown ſo famous for its bluntneſſe, its undecency, and its meanneſſe, which is generally known to all, of the Aſſe feeding in a wheat field, and which the children would drive out thence with poles and ſtaves compar'd to *Ajax* in the midſt of an engagement orewhelm'd with a haile-ſhower of blowes by the enemies. I leave it to be imagin'd what a noble effect that ſhould have in a production ſo grave and ſerious as that of the *Iliad*; and whether the draught and colours of this Compariſon afford a proſpect any thing pleaſant, whatever

light it be turn'd to. For there are ſome Grammarians, who ſet their wits on the rack to find ſome delicacy in it. Yet ſhall not ſtick to acknowledge, that there are in this Poet, ſome admirable compariſons, but very ſeldome to be met withall, wherein he expoſes all that is imaginable of graces and beauty in the diſcourſe and expreſſion, and whereof *Virgil* hath ſo admirably made his advantage, and which he hath ſo well plac'd in his Work by aſſigning them his own air and light.

Deſcriptions, which are to be accounted, what is moſt childiſh and of leaſt force in Eloquence, are over-frequent in *Homers* Works, and ſpun out too much; and they carry with them a certain air of affectation. The deſcription of *Alcinous*'s Garden in the ſeventh, and that of the Port of *Ithaca* in the thirteenth of the *Odyſſyes*, are of that ſort. The deſcription of the Port, and that of the Grot inhabited by the Nymphs, takes up eighteen verſes, upon which *Porphyrius* hath certain Commenta-

mentaries. That of *Virgil*, where he deſcribes Mount *Ætna*, in the third, conſiſts only of three verſes, though it might have given him ſo fair an occaſion of dilating. True it is, the deſcription of the Port of *Lybia* amounts to ten verſes, and that of *Fame*, in the fourth, to much more: but the former is pardonable, in regard it was requiſite to give the Readers mind ſome breathing-time, after that of the Tempeſt; and it is the greateſt deſcription of any place in the whole *Æneid*. And the ſecond, which is the deſcription of *Fame*, is not the nobleſt part in that Author. For he is reſerv'd every where elſe, and does not fall into thoſe childiſhneſſes, which *Horace*, in his Art of Poetry treats as inſupportable in very ſerious matters.

—— *Cum lucus & ara* Dianæ
Et properantis aquæ per amœnos ambitus agros.
Aut flumen Rhenum, *aut pluvius deſcribitur arcus.*

Theſe deſcriptions of Woods, Temples Rivulets, the Rain-bow, and other pleaſant things, have a ſmack of puerility, ſayes that great man, and are no more ſuitable to great ſubjects, than a very rich and glittering ſtuffe, to another that is very ſimple and modeſt.

Incæpti gravibus plerunq; & magna profeſſis
Purpureus latè qui ſplendeat unus & alter
Aſſuitur pannus ——

Theſe far-fetch'd beauties never do well, in as much, as wherever they are plac'd, they cannot have any rapport to the reſt, by the reaſon of their being too glittering;

Non erat his locus ——

I muſt alſo be acknowledg'd, that *Homer* is more admirable than *Virgil*, in Epithets and Adverbs. This indeed is his Maſter-piece never was there any imagination richer, or more happy, and

and it is but a raillery, to pretend that he repeats the πόδας ὠκὺς. There is no such thing, he is impoſed upon; I have counted above twenty ſorts of other Epithets in the *Iliad*, for *Achilles* alone. *Virgil*, in compariſon, is poore as to thoſe kind of ornamants, which proceed from the rich and fruitfull treaſury of the *Greek* Tongue, which the *Latine* has not. Yet may it be ſaid of this exteriour dreſs, what a certain perſon ſaid, ſometime ſince of a great Courtier, who was a very handſome perſon, that, if his ranting ſleeves and Periwig, were taken off, he would be but as another man. For if we ſtrip *Homer* of his Adverbs and Epithets, he would come into the rank of ordinary Poets. And that doubtleſs is the moſt ornamental part of him, and what makes up one of his greateſt beauties.

But it were not amiſs, after all, to obſerve, that theſe Epithets, which ſo much adorn him, are very ſimple, obvious, and ordinary. For without any more ado, he calls ſnow *white*; milk *ſweet*;

ſweet; fire *burning*. He does ſeek ſo much delicacy therein as our young Authors, who do not allow any epithets ſupportable, if they have not a kind of contrary or counter-ſignification to the words join'd with them, to give a more extraordinary aire to the diſcourſe, and to make it glitter and ſparkle by that oppoſition, of which the depraved taſte makes a delicacy. For there are ſome who think it the pleaſanteſt thing in the world to ſee thoſe words join'd together, which cannot endure one the other. *Ovid*, in his *Metamorphoſes* and *Heroick Epiſtles*, and *Velleius Paterculus* were the firſt that gave that falſe guſto to their age, which was ſo much a lover of ſimplicity. *Seneca* would needs imitate them, with all the writers of *Declamations*, the fragments of whom we read in his Controverſies; but they did it without that diſtinctive precaution, which is obſervable in *Ovid* and *Paterculus*, who knew how to be thrifty in the diſpoſal of thoſe counterfeit pearles. *Lucan* and

Tacitus

Tacitus made that character their particular ſtudy, and made an art of clinching or quibbling, which for the moſt part is only a game conſiſting of words oppoſite among themſelves, ſuch as ſuperficial witts are ſo much enamour'd of. And in fine, 'twas conſequently to the propagation of this univerſal debauche, that the Epigrams of *Martial*, and the Panegyricks of *Pliny*, *Pacatus*, and *Mamertinus* came into play. Not but that this kind of writing has its beauties, but they are like thoſe of women who paint, and are forc'd to ſeek out exteriour and artificial ornaments, becauſe they have not any naturall or reall ones.

Nor is it to be argu'd hence, but that an Epithet which is ſmart, briſk, and well plac'd, is a marvailous ornament in a diſcourſe, as that uſ'd by *Dido* in her Epiſtle to *Æneas*,

Exerces precioſa odia —

in the *Heroick Epiſtles* of *Ovid*, which alwayes

alwayes call the moſt glittering par
in thoſe works that are the pure pro
ductions of the mind, and whereto
our Poets will never attain; And tha
which *Velleius Paterculus* gives to *L. Do
mitius*, when he calls him *eminentiſſima
ſimplicitatis virum*, and abundance o
others which may be found in thoſe
two Authors. But whereas thoſe kinds
of expreſſions betray a certain luſter,
it happens, that ſome have not the
moderation requiſite in the cautious
huſbanding of them which they had.
For the ordinary imperfection of thoſe
perſons who have the talent of expreſ-
ſing themſelves in a pleaſant and face-
tious way, is that they are apt to ſpeak
too much, in regard they ſuffer them-
ſelves to be tranſported with the ſuc-
ceſs they meet withal, accuſtome them-
ſelves thereto, and at length become diſ-
guſtful and importunate, through an ex-
ceſſive paſſion they have to be alwayes
divertive in their diſcourſe. So that it
were much better, in order to the
preventing of this imperfection, and
the more to keep themſelves within
the

the limits of ſound ſence, eſpecially in a continued diſcourſe, which ought to diſcover a certain character of grandeur and elevation, to forbear the uſe of thoſe ſo far fetch'd Epithets, and ſuch as have a certain aire of myſtery. Thoſe which are the moſt obvious and common, and which beſt expreſſe the nature of the things, are alwayes the moſt pertinent, ſuch as are thoſe uſed by *Homer*. I muſt acknowledge that to do this, there is requiſite a greater ſtock of prudence and diſcernment, than of wit and fancy but men never ſpeak well, but when they think wiſely, and ſuch as do ſo, are never ſhort of their reckoning, as the Critick hath obſerved; *Adeo nihil commodius eſt quam ſemper rem ſapientiâ loqui.* Which is to be underſtood, as much of the nature of the diſcourſe, as of its morality.

OBSERV

Observation XI.

How the character of Homer *is to be diſtinguiſh'd from that of* Virgil.

WHoever is deſirous to judge with any kind of certainty of theſe two incomparable Authors, muſt be very exact in diſcerning between their ſeveral characters, which are extreamly oppoſite. For if *Homer* be obſervable in the inclination he has to ſpeak much, *Virgil* is remarkable for his inclination to be ſilent: and it is from this difference, that we may make an exact computation of the ſingularity of their *Genius*'s, and of the eſſential mark of their character. There are many perſons guilty of a great affectation to be thought Criticks, and make it their buſineſs to judge of *Virgil* by profound reflections, without having ever obſerv'd in what the eminent quality of the fancy and judgement of that Poet, whereby he is diſtinguiſh'd from all

all the reſt, does conſiſt. For my own part, who admire nothing ſo much in his way of writing, as the admirable reſervedneſſe and moderation he is maſter of in expreſſing things, and in not expreſſing any more then what is requiſite, I have ever been of opinion, that he might be diſtinguiſh'd by them. A man muſt be very attentive in the peruſall of him; to find out that his reſervedneſſe and ſilence in certain paſſages, ſpeakes much, and argues an exquiſite diſcretion; and when he has diſcover'd the ſecret of being well aſſur'd of his meaning, he finds him ſometimes as admirable in what he ſaies not, as in what he ſayes.

And for my part, I do not know any Author but *Virgil* that has a talent of prudence great enough to keep in the whole ſtock of his moderation and ſtayedneſſe of iudgement, amidſt the ardour and excitations of an imagination enflam'd by the genins of Poeſy, and that the moſt inſpire'd of any that ever was, *Lucan*, in compariſon

riſon of him, is an inconſiderate writer; and *Statius*, a furious one. Nor could *Ovid* ever arrive to that excellency, till towards his latter dayes, when he writ his *Faſti*, which is the only part of his works, wherein he is moderate and diſcreet: in all the reſt he diſcovers his youthfullneſſe. Nor do his inductions of examples and compariſons in his books *De Triſtibus*, and his other Elegies, come neer that character; and his *Heroick Epiſtles*, which I call the flower of the Roman wit, have not any thing of that maturity of judgement, which is the tranſcendent perfection of *Virgil*. As to which perticular I compare him to thoſe Generalls of Armies, who carry along with them into the midſt of a fight all the flegme and tranquillity of there Cloſet Counſells, and who in the greateſt heat of action, amidſt the noiſe of Canons, Drums, and Trumpets, and the general diſtraction and tumult of an Engagement, are not attentive to any thing but what their own prudence and moderation dictates

to them, inducing them to consult only thier own reason. And this is a character not to be imagin'd in any but great Soules, and such as dare pretend to a consummate wisdome, as was that of *Virgil*, who in the heat of his poetica fury, saies no more then is requisite to be said, and alwayes leaves more to be thought of, then he saies of a thing.

This is a commendation much like that which *Pliny* gives the admirable Painter named *Timantes*, whose elogy he makes in the 10. chap. of the 35. book of his History: *Timanti plurimum adfuit ingenii, in omnibus operibus ejus intelligitur plus semper quam pingitur.* And a litle lower he addes, the better to expresse his reflection; *Rarum in successu artis, ut ostendat etiam quæ occultat:* And which was that miraculous eloquence whereof *Cicero* speaks to his Friend: || *Sumpsi aliquid hoc loco de tuâ eloquentiâ, nam tacui.* And it is my judgement, that in this exact circumspection, and this admirable

G parsimony

|| *Epist. ad. Att. lib.* 13.

parſimony of diſcourſe, we are to find the true character of *Virgil*, who ſlightly paſſes over things, as a Traveller that is in great haſte, without inſiſting too long upon them: he generouſly prunes & cuts off all the ſuperfluities, that he may retaine but what is purely neceſſary. And indeed in that anatomy of things conſiſts the excellency of a work, which is never more perfect, than when there cannot be any thing cut off from it.

It was alſo in this perfection that that exquiſiteneſſe of ſound ſence conſiſted, which reign'd at *Rome* in the time of *Auguſtus*, and which was the character of all the excellent witts that writ then, and whom we look on as the only modells of the purity of diſcourſe, ſobriety of expreſſions, and that admirable aire of writing which is in vogue at this day.

Of this we have a proofe in the order which *Auguſtus* gave *Tacca* and *Varius*, to review the *Æneid*, which the Author would have ſuppreſſ'd, as not

not thinking is compleat. He permitted them to cut off thoſe parts of it, which might be taken away without injury to the work; but he forbad them to doe any thing thereto, nay not ſo much as to compleat the Verſes which were imperfect. Twas the humour and guſto of that happy time to cut off what they could in diſcourſe, to be ſober and frugal therein, and to ſpeak little. *Lucretius*, who is ſo pure and ſo polite had not yet attai'd that perfection. And *Catullus*, who was the firſt among the Romanes, that began to improve and heighten the Language wtih the advantages of elegance, had not as yet learnt that great precept which Horace has ſince ſo much inculcated to the *Piſones*;

——Prudens verſus reprehendet inertes
Ambitioſa recidet ornamenta;
Luxuriantia compeſcat:

He does not repeat any thing elſe, in his Satyr upon *Lucilius*:

——*Currat ſententia, neu ſe*
Impediat verbis laſſas onerantibus aures.

And a litle lower, ſpeaking of the ſame *Lucilius*, hee ſaies, that if he had floriſh'd in his time, he would have known how to have contracted himſelf, and no doubt would have daſh'd out many things out of his verſes;

Detereret ſibi multa, recideret omne quod
Perfectum traheretur —— (ultra

This was their courſe in that time, which they had learnt from the dictates of ſound ſence, then in its Empire, which *Virgil* hath ſo well practis'd, and whereof he makes his eſſentiall character.

On the contrary, that of *Homer* is obſervable for his tedioufneſſe in ſpeaing and relating things. He is the greateſt talker of all Antiquity, inſomuch that the *Greeks* themſelves, though chargeable with exceſſive diſcourſing above all others, have reprehended *Homer* for that intemperance of words,

as

as a conſiderable miſcarriage in diſcourſe, which they call'd ἀπεραντολογία. He is ever in his rehearſalls, not only as to the ſame words, but alſo to the ſame things; and ſo he is in a perpetual circulation of repetitions. That flux of the tongue, and that ebullition of fancy make him carry things much beyond the mark they ought to have been levell'd at; and thence it comes, that the draughts he makes of things are for the moſt part too accurate; and by that means he leaves nothing to be done by the imagination of the Reader, who, in order to his particular ſatifaction, ought regularly to be as much taken up with what he thinks of, as what he reads.

Vpon this account is it that *Virgil* never burthens his thoughts with the whole matter lying before him, that ſo he may leave ſome part of it expos'd to the reflections of thoſe who read him. Young Authors, who are all apt to be impertinently zealous in what they do, and to run into

the character that has a ſmock of puerility; and all thoſe who are leſſe fortify'd with judgment, then fancy, are not able to comprehend this maxime: for, out of a defect of experience, they follow their natural inclination, and as by an exceſs of diſcourſe and verboſity they carry things beyond their proper limits, ſo they ordinarily give *ideas* for true objects, by making too too accurate repreſentations of all the matter they handle. This is an imperfection which *Apelles* reprehended in the Painters of his time, as *Cicero* obſerves, *Pictores eos errare dicebat, qui non ſentirent, quid eſſet ſatis.*

Yet are we further to obſerve, that this defect relates only to the expreſſion and the words. For it is a very great perfection for any one to give the moſt compleat images he can of things, and alwaies to raiſe his ſuperſtructures upon the ground-work of the greateſt *ideas.*

Observ. XII.

Of the unity of the Subject and Time of the two Poems.

YEt is it to be acknowledg'd, that there cannot be any thing more advantageouſly ſaid of *Homer*, than what *Ariſtotle*, the wiſeſt and moſt judicious of all the Criticks, hath ſaid of him. He propoſes him in his Books of Poeſy for the model of the *Epick* Poem, and he derives all his precepts from the *Iliad* and the *Odyſſey*. But it may alſo be urg'd on the other ſide, that *Ariſtotle* having not met with, in his time, but only two inconſiderable Poems, one upon *Hercules*. and the other upon *Theſeus*, whereof he ſpeaks in his Poeticks, which might come into any conteſt with the *Iliad* and the *Odyſſey*, it is not to be wondred at, that he takes theſe for a model, ſince the two others are rather the Lives

of *Hercules* and *Theſius*, than the ſubject of an Epick action.

And that was it made *Horace* ſpeak ſo earneſtly againſt thoſe Poets, whom he calls *Cyclick* Authors, by reaſon of the pure natural and hiſtorical repreſentation they gave of things, multiplying matters clearly againſt the ſimplicity and the unity of action, which is eſſential to the *Epopæa*: upon which ſcore we are yet further to examine *Homer* and *Virgil*, that ſo we may not omit any thing requir'd in an exact compariſon.

I grant, that as to the unity of the time, the *Iliad* and the *Odyſſey* have the preheminence over the *Æneid*: for the action of the *Odyſſey*, from *Ulyſſes's* leaving *Calypſo* to his being diſcover'd, laſts but forty five days; and the action of the *Iliad* takes up but eight or nine months at moſt: and the *Æneid* takes up a whole year and ſomewhat more.

Nay

Nay ſome pretend that the unity of action is more perfect in the two Poems of *Homer*, than it is in that of *Virgil*; inaſmuch as not only the action of both of them is one and the ſame, but alſo of one ſingle perſon. For *Achilles* does all things himſelf; the ſame thing is to be ſaid of *Ulyſſes*, (as *Ariſtotle* affirms) who reeſtabliſhes himſelf without the aſſiſtance of any other: and that ſeems to argue a certain hint of grandeur. *Æneas* does not any thing but with the aſſiſtance of his people; which is not ſo much to be wondred at. And *Paul Beni* obſerves in the ſecond of his *Academical Diſcourſes*, that the Apologiſt of *Dante* pretends that his Poem is more perfect in regard it is the action of one ſingle perſon: *Coſtui Poema, oltre eſſer Heroico e fatto anco di attione, di uno aſſolutamente ſolo. E ciò ad eſſempio, non già de l Æneide, ove con aſſercito opra Enea: ma ben dell Iliade e Odiſſea; dove al fin e Achille e Ulliſſe ſolo fa Heroiche impreſe: perciò conclude che il Poema di Dante ſia eccellentemente maraviglioſo e*

illuſtre

This Poem, beſides that it is Heroick, is alſo compos'd of action, and that of one perſon only: And this according to the example, not only of the Æneid, wherein Æneas acts with an Army; but alſo of the Iliad and Odyſſey, where in fine both Achilles *and* Ulyſſes *perform alone all the heroick actions: whence he concludes, that* Dante's *Poem is excellently marvellous and illuſtrious.*

To this it may be anſwer'd, that the unity of the perſon is ſufficiently preſerv'd by that of his Character and condition; That the Epick Poem ought to preſent the perfect Idea of a great Captain and General of an Army, and and not of a Knight-Errant, who moſt commonly is but a phantaſm and a Romantick Palladine: and it frames a greater character of a Hero, and it attributes to him a much more noble aire of dignity, to make him a Soveraign and the head of a people, as *Beni* obſerves in the ſame place: *L' attione Heroica debbe eſſe una d'un ſolo, ma però Prencipe & capo di molti:* in regard that,

that, as he ſaies, great enterpriſes, ſuch as the conqueſt of Countries and Kingdoms, the ſieges of Cities, and Battels, ought to be carry'd on by Armies, managed by the conduct and deſignes of one perſon, which is as much as is requiſite for the unity of the action. Beſides, there is always a defectiveneſs as to matter of probability in thoſe actions of Knight-Errants and ſolitary Worthies, ſuch as *Hercules* was, and however they are dreſs'd up, they ſtill ſmell ſtrong of the Romance and Fable.

Nay we may further add, that the unity of action, ſo it be rightly taken, is more perfectly ſerv'd in the *Æneid*, than in the *Iliad*, where after the death of *Hector*, which ought to have clos'd the action, there are ſtill two Books to come; the 23. which comprehends the Exerciſes celebrated for the death of *Patroclus*, and which contribute nothing to the principal action; and the 24. which contains the Lamentations of the Trojans, and the ran-

ranſoming of *Hector's* body, which have no connection to the principal action, that being compleat without it.

There is yet this further fault to be noted, that a Poem, which had no other deſign then to celebrate the honour of the Greeks, ſhould be cloſ'd with that which is done to *Hector*, the chiefeſt of their Enemies, where the Poet employes a whole Book, to give the deſcription of his funeral ſolemnities; which procedure ſeems to be in ſome manner defective; and it is of ſuch a work we may cite that paſſage of *Horace*, which few underſtand as it ought to be underſtood;

‖ —— *Amphora cæpit*
Inſtitui, currente rotâ cur urceus exit?

Homer takes his beginning the beſt in the world, for the honour of the Greeks: their glory is the only thing he proſecutes in all his work; and he makes

‖ *Art. Poet.*

makes an end by that of *Hector*, whoſe loſs he brings in lamented with ſo much magnificence. Was it not a little miſtake in him to forget the deſign he had propoſed to himſelf? Does not the *Æneid* take its period much better by the death of *Turnus*, which cloſes the action? *Virgil* does not carry on things any farther; he knew well enough, that he had committed a fault if he had not ſtop'd there.

Abundance of other obſervations might be made upon a minute examination of thoſe two works; and particularly upon the delicacy wherewith *Virgil* reflects on things, wherein he hath ſtill a great advantage over *Homer*, whoſe thoughts are not delicate upon any ſubject. For what more inſinuating, what more ſurpriſing can there be imagin'd then that of the Apotheoſis of *Anchiſes*, in the fift of the *Æneid*, which ſo highly flatters *Auguſtus* and the *Romans*, with an extraction whereof he ſo ingeniouſly eſtabliſhes the Divinity? Not to make any mention of the moſt illuſtrious *Roman* Families

milies allegorically decipher'd in the combats deſcrib'd in the ſame Book, the myſtery and application whereof *Paul Beni* explicates in his Commentaries upon *Virgil.*

What is there to be found in *Homer* any way comparable to that paſſage, which I have ever look'd upon as of exquiſite delicacy, in the ſixt of the *Æneids*, where *Virgil* is content to attribute to the *Greeks*, the glory of being ingenious, reſerving to the *Romans* that of Authority and juriſdiction?

Excudent alii ſpirantia mollius æra,
Orabunt cauſas melius, &c.——
Tu regere imperio populos, Romãe, memẽto.

What ſhall I ſay of the

Littora littoribus contraria —

in the fourth Book, which works ſo admirable an effect in order to the war between *Rome* and *Carthage*? Of *Dido's*

Dido's imprecation, by the expreſſion of ſo paſſionate a revenge?

Exoriare aliquis noſtris ex oſſibus ultor, &c.

which, in the obſcurity of future events does ſo delicatly point at the great *Hannibal*, the moſt illuſtrious enemy of the Common wealth, and with whom *Rome* was ſo long diſputing the Empire of the world. The death of *Marcellus* in the ſixt is of the ſame force, nay hath ſomewhat that is more inſinuating and more exquiſite, as it appeard by the impreſſion which that paſſage on the ſpirit of *Auguſtus*, and much more upon the heart of *Octavia* his Mother, who fell into a ſwound at the very reitation, which *Virgil* made of it in the Emperors preſence.

ſhall ſay nothing of all the complants of *Dido* in the fourth, which male Saint *Auguſtine* weep ſo often as, he himſelf acknowledges in his || *Confeſſions.*

|| *Lib.* 1. *c.* 14.

feſſions. He is far enough from having that tenderneſs for *Homer* whom he complements no better, then to call him *dulciſſimè vanus*.

In a word, *Virgil* is much more ſolid, his expreſſions have ſomewhat in them that is more real; He does not ſpeak ſo much at randome, nay his very diſcourſes of greateſt tenderneſſe and paſſion, which in any other would diſcover a certain character of lightneſs, have not in his work any thing that is frivolous and chimericall; there is no any thing, but has ſome ground, and his words are ſo many things; which renders him more affective and more patheticall

There are yet a thouſand other paſſages, which I ſhall not ſtand to inſiſt upon, as that of the ſecond of the *Æneid*;

Iliaci cineres, et flamma extrema meorum
which alone deſtroys all the objections that may be made againſt *Æneas*, of

his

his defect in point of valour. The death of *Dido*, touch'd over with an aire ſo pathetick, which begins with this Verſe

At trepida et cæptis immanibus ;——

The abbridgement of the *Romane* Hiſtory grav'd upon the Buckler in the eight, the explication of the deſtinies of the *Romane* Empire by *Jupiter*, in the firſt, the Conqueſts of *Auguſtus*, to whom he dedicates his work in the ſixt which make an admirable elogy of that Emperour,

Hic vir hic eſt &c.

and all thoſe admirable inſinuations, whereof he does with ſo much artifice make his advantage, to force his way into mens apprehenſions, and to inſpire them with his inclinations and affections, which every where beare the expreſſion of his genius, which are are ſo many miracles of art, and cannot be perceiv'd but only by ſuch as are intimately acquainted with him, and accordingly able to judge of him. For there is a greater

penetration and perſpicacity of apprehenſion requiſite, to diſcover what is good and excellent in a work, than to find in it what is defective: inaſmuch as the defects are more remarkable than the true beauties, which eaſily elude the reflections of perſons of an ordinary rate of underſtanding, and diſcover themſelves only to the more intelligent.

But whereas the nobleſt paſſage of *Virgil*, and his reall Maſter-piece, is the paſſion of *Dido*, I cannot let it paſs without allowing it a ſtricter reflection than any of the reſt. True it is, that Eloquence never employ'd all its advantages of artifice and ornaments in any Work with ſo great ſucceſs as in that. All the degrees of that paſſion, all the renovations of that growing affection, and that well known frailty of the ſexe, are there diſcover'd in ſuch a manner as raiſes admiration in the beſt able to judge of them; and the greater their abilities are, the more will they be diſpoſ'd to diſcover the excellency of that paſſage, and to admire

mire all the parts of it. All is neat, delicate and highly paſſionate in the deſcription of that adventure, and the world is not likely ever to ſee any thing that ſhall ſurpaſſe it.

Taſſo indeed may haply afford us ſome paſſages which ſeem to have a greater eye of luſtre, as that of the adventure of *Tancrede* and *Clorinda*: but if we look on him of all ſides, we ſhall find, that all the proportions and correſpondencies with the principal action, do not ſeem to be ſo exactly obſerv'd there, as they are in that of *Dido*.

Yet is there one great reproach made to *Virgil*, to wit, that he has put a filthy ſlur on that Lady, by attributing ſo great a paſſion to her, contrary to her true character. For Hiſtory makes her a woman of good repute. But this is an artifice, and that the moſt delicate and ſubtle of any obſervable in *Virgil*, who to excite a certain contempt for a Nation which was afterwards to be ſo deteſtable

teſtable to the *Romans*, conceiv'd himſelf oblig'd, not to celebrate any vertue in her, who ſhould be the foundreſs of it, imagining he might, without any diſparagement to himſelf, ſacrifice her, the better to flatter his own Country, which no doubt, would have boggled at the reputation Hiſtory gave that Princeſs. And whereas this artifice was advanc'd only to humour the *Romans*, and that the Poet himſelf look'd on them as Maſters of the world, with whoſe ſentiments all other Nations ought to comply, or at leaſt to conform thereto, yet he thought himſelf concern'd to uſe all precautions, to prepoſſeſs their minds, upon that diſguiſing of the truth. To that purpoſe he cunningly brings the Gods into the plot, to put a better gloſs upon the ſacrificing of her. *Venus* and *Cupid* make it their buſineſs. Nay he makes them uſe all their art to ſmother the good repute which common fame gave that Queen. This is the ſubject of *Juno's* complaint to *Venus*, which ſerves only to make a fuller

fuller diſcovery of the earneſt ſollicitation of thoſe two Divinities to ſurpriſe, and, in the end, to ſeduce *Dido*;

Egregiam verò laudem, & ſpolia ampla refertis
Tup; puerq; tuus, &c.

The Characters of *Sinon* in the ſecond of the *Æneid*, and that of *Mezentius*, in the eighth and tenth, are alſo of the higheſt pitch of accompliſhment. *Homer* indeed has many more of that kind, and a greater variety of them: but thoſe on which *Virgil* thought fit to beſtow a particular draught, are better proſecuted than thoſe of *Homer*, and he has found the ſecret to expreſs them with a greater livelineſs.

Yet muſt it be acknowledg'd that *Homer* has a better ſtor'd and more ſumptuous ſtock of invention, and greater varieties; a more delicate and and divertive caſt of verſification; a

more ſparkling air of expreſſing things, nay a ſmarter and more peircing ſound of words, more ſuitable to Poeſy, and ſuch as much more fills the ear; for the defect whereof || *Cicero* found fault with *Demoſthenes*: *Vſque eò difficiles ac moroſi ſumus, ut nobis non ſatisfaciat ipſe Demoſthenes, non ſemper implet aures meas, ita ſunt avidæ & capaces, & ſemper aliquid immenſum infinitumq; deſiderant.*

This indeed *Homer* has much beyond *Virgil*, and the eare is much more ſatisfy'd with the currency, the harmony, and the whole air of his verſification; becauſe the *Greek* Tongue has all thoſe advantages over the *Latine*, which is more modeſt, more grave, and more ſerious. True it is alſo, that he has a greater extent of matters, and affords his Readers a larger proſpect; but his fancy ever and anon hurries him from one place to another; he is not ſo much maſter of it, as *Virgil* is of his. Twas this defect that

that made him commit that ſo eſſential an overſight of adding the two books of the *Iliad* after the cloſe of the action; one, of the death of *Hector* the other, of the Games for that of *Patroclus*; and one other after that of the *Odyſſey*, which is the mutual diſcovery, of one to the other, of *Ulyſſes* and *Penelope*. For as every Poem, as well *Epick* as *Dramatick*, ought to take its period with the cloſe of the principal action, ſo after the ſaid cloſe, which ought to put an end to things, a man cannot make any addition thereto, without committing an extravagance.

I find few paſſages in *Homer*, ſuch as may be oppos'd to thoſe of *Virgil*. Yet can I not forbear having a kindneſs for that of the ſixt book of the *Iliad*, where *Andromache*, who was ſo honeſt and vertuous a woman, bids adieu to her Husband *Hector*, then going to his laſt combat with *Achilles*. In a word, tis impoſſible to imagine any thing of greater tenderneſs than that adieu, wherein that Princeſs, by

a preſentiment of ſomething diſaſtrous, let fall ſome tears, a thing ſhe was not wont to do, for ſhe was not ſubject to any weakneſs, and the Poet ſaies delicately enough, that ſhe began *to lament with her women, the death of* Hector, *who was yet alive.*

ἔτι ζωὸν γόον Ἕκτορα.

True it is, that in regard people do bewayl only dead perſons, and that ſhe bewayls a man that is alive, that expreſſion is tender and well imagin'd; there are but few ſuch in *Homer*; for though the expreſſions are ſtill kept up in him, and are not ever neglected, yet the things he ſaies do as it were lagg and languiſh. Of this rank is the numbring of the *Græcian* Fleet in the ſecond of the *Iliad*: all there is at the ſame rate, and the ſquadrons are all for the moſt part terminated by one and the ſame Verſe:

——— μελαίναι νῆες ἕποντο.

And

And all the banquets of the *Iliad* are ſerv'd up in the ſame faſhion, without any variety.

Nay *Ulyſſes's* being known by his wife *Penelope*, in the 23. of the *Odyſſey*, which was the moſt favourable paſſage in the world to ſet all the ſubtleties of art on work, has nothing but flat and ſimple ſurpriſes, cold and heavy aſtoniſhments, and very litle delicacy of ſentiment and real tenderneſſe. *Penelope* is too long obſtinate, in oppoſing the reaſons they alledge to perſuade her, that he is her husband, who contributes nothing himſelf to his own diſcovery; He ſuffers his wife to hearken too long to her diſtruſt and circumſpection; the formalities ſhe obſerves to be aſſur'd of all things, are there ſet down by tale and meaſure, leaſt there might be any miſtake, which methinks has ſomewhat that is mournfull and languiſhing, in a place which requir'd ſo much fire and vivacity. Ought not the ſecret inſtinct of her Love to have inſpir'd her with other thoughts? And

ſhou'd

ſhould not her heart have told her what her eies did not tell her? For Love is illuminated and inſpir'd; he has a ſecret and myſterious voice, which explicates his meaning better than the ſenſes. But *Homer* was not skill'd in that Philoſophy, which the *Italians* have ſince ſo much taught; and *Virgil*, who makes *Dido* foreſee the deſigne *Æneas* had to forſake her, before ſhe had notice brought her of it, would have made a better advantage of that occaſion.

Observ. XIII.

That there is in Homer *a greater air of Morality and ſententiouſneſs, than in* Virgil.

WE muſt not alſo diſpute this advantage with *Homer*; for this is ſo true, that *Macrobius* lib. 5. c. 6. of his Queſtions, ſaies that *Homer* has ſtuff'd his Poems with ſentences, and that his pleaſant ſayings were quoted by

by the People as Proverbs. *Homerus omnem Poeſim ſuam ita ſententiis farſit, ut ſingula ejus apophthegmata vicem proverbiorum in civium ore fungantur.* And an *Engliſh* Author hath lately given us a conſiderable volume of ſentences collected out of *Homer*, upon all the matters of Morality, which he has reduc'd into common places.

But I pretend with *Heinſius*, in his Poetical tract upon *Ariſtotle*, that thoſe ſententious reflections of Morality are rather deſign'd for the *Theatre*, and of the *Dramatick* kind, than of the *Heroick*, the eſſential character whereof is *Narration*, which ought to be of a continued thread, and ſimple, without affectation of figures, and without all that tackle of reflections, which deſpoil a diſcourſe of its natural colour and force: a fault wherewith that excellent Author of the *Satyricon* does ſo earneſtly reproach the declamators of his time, *Inanibus ſonis ludibria quædam excitando effeciſtis, ut corpus Orationis enervaretur, & caderet. By gingling and rediculous diſcourſes*

ſes, you have enervated the body of the Oration, and brought it to the ground.

In a word, that force which ſome pretend ordinarlily to ſumme up in a ſmall compaſſe of words to make up a ſentence, is wont to exhauſt, and extreamly weaken the reſt of the diſcourſe, by depriving it of its natural ſimplicity, and giving it a forc'd aire. For this reaſon is *Livy* a much more accompliſh'd Hiſtorian than *Tacitus*, in regard he has leſſe reflections, which are more proper for the *Theatre*, than for *Hiſtory*, and *Narration*. ‖ *Cicero* is alſo of that judgment in one of his Books of *Rhetorick*: *Sententias interponi rarò convenit; ut rei actores, non vivendi præceptores eſſe videamur.* So that Sentences and morall reflections are a beauty not fit for the *Epick* Poem, in regard they are not ſuitable to *Narration*, which is the principal and eſſentiall character thereof. Yet may the Poet bring in to it ſome ſentences or reflections, when he makes the Actors ſpeak

‖ *Ad Herenl. 4.*

ſpeak whom he introduces; but he ought not to do it, when he ſpeakes himſelf, unleſſe it be very ſeldome; and then too it muſt not ſeem to have been ſought for.

As to this we may ſafely imitate *Livy* who in the body of his Hiſtory puts in very litle of that kind, but reſerves it to be ſaid by thoſe whom he makes to ſpeak. So that the Poet is to let them ſlip by, without affecting to be the utterer of them, much leſs to ſcatter and ſtrew them up and down as *Homer* does: and it is a miſtake for any to think to eſteem him upon that account, inaſmuch as that affectation is certainly an imperfection, which *Virgil* found out a way to avoid; reflecting that there was not any thing more oppoſite to that ſimple and continu'd air, which he profeſſed to obſerve, than thoſe glittering words and fancies, which ſeem Independent from the diſcourſe, and jutting out of the ſtructure, in regard they are not well proportion'd thereto, and ſerve only to magnify the

the Object, and make a noiſe; *Rerum tumore & ſententiarum vaniſſimo ſtrepitu.*

And this has ſome reference to that great precept of natural reaſon, for thoſe who make it their buſineſs to write; which one of the moſt expert and ſubtle Criticks of all Antiquity gave heretofore, and which is not ſufficiently underſtood: *Curandum ne ſententiæ emineant extra corpus orationis expreſſæ; ſed intexto veſtibus colore niteant:* which paſſage I tranſlate not, that all may be at liberty to render it, according to their ſeveral abilities. It ſuffices, as to what I pretend, that it appears, that Author, does in that place condemn the fancies which a too ſtrong and too brisk expreſſion, makes, in ſome ſort, diſtinguiſhable from the body of the Diſcourſe; he would have nothing over exquiſite, or too far-fetc'd, and that all the luſtre be as natural to it, as colour is to garments. Theſe ſorts of ſimple and natural words, ſaith he, did natural reaſon dictate to *Sophocles* and *Euripides*, and which they ſaw it neceſſary

ceſſary to uſe in ſpeech, before men bethought themſelves of ſhutting up youth in Schools, and to limit all the exerciſes of the mind to pure Declamations. *Nondum Juvenes declamationibus continebantur, cum* Sophocles & Euripides *invenerunt verba quibus deberent loqui.* In a word, all theſe ornaments of words and briſk fancies ſo far-fetc'd and ſo frequent, deprive the diſcourſe of its natural beauty and true dignity : ‖*Gravitas minuitur exornationibus frequenter collocatis, quod eſt in his lepos & feſtivitas, non dignitas neq; pulchritudo,* And this principal is general for all great things, whoſe grandeur attended by a regular ſimplicity, makes all the excellence and dignity of them; as we ſee in Painting and Architecture, where great fancies are kept up much leſs by the multitude of ornaments, than by that ſimple and even, but regular air, which gives them their grandeur and Majeſty.

OBSERV

‖ *Cic ad Heren. lib.* 4.

Obſerv. XIV.

Shewing how Homer *has the glory of invention over* Virgil.

Invention, one of the qualities moſt eſſential to the Poet, is one of the advantages of *Homer* wherein he deſerves preference before *Virgil*. For he is the Model, and original, which *Virgil* propos'd to himſelf. But it is to be obſerv'd, that as ‖*Ariſtotle* makes mention of a ſmall *Iliad*, attributed by *Suidas* to one named *Antimachus*, which was the abbridgment of a greater, upon which there is ſome likelyhood that *Homer* fram'd his work; ſo it may be conjectur'd thence, that the glory of the invention was not wholy due to him.

Beſides, we read in ‖*Athenæus*, that one *Hegeſtanax* had writ, in verſe, before *Homer*, what had paſs'd at the Siege of

‖ *Poet. c.* 23. ‖ *Lib.* 3.

of *Troy*. *Cicero* alſo makes mention of one *Calliſthenes*, who had written upon the ſame ſubject. 'Tis true that he liv'd in the time of *Alexander*, that is to ſay, ſome ages after *Homer*: but it is to be conceiv'd, that he had other collections different from thoſe of *Homer*, ſince he gave a different account of that expedition, then he has done.

Suidas affirms, that one *Corinnus*, a Diſciple of *Palamedes*, had alſo written an *Iliad* in Verſe, about the time that *Troy* was taken: and that another Poet, contemporary to *Homer*, named *Syagrus*, had alſo written upon that ſubject: That all thoſe works were ſuppreſs'd by the endeavours of *Homer*, who was not ſo blind, (as ſome have imagin'd) as not to make it his buſineſs to tranſmit his own labours only to poſterity, and ſo to be accounted the firſt Author of the *Iliad*. And as the others were his model, as he was that of *Virgil*, ſo it were to be wiſh'd, that we knew, whether he has been as happy in the copying of others, as *Virgil* has been in imitating him.

But we are to make a great abatement of the eſteem which all Antiquity hath had for *Homer*, if we credit what *Ælian* ſaies in his || Hiſtory. He pretends, that the opinion of the Learned of his time was, that *Homer* had not compos'd the *Iliad* and *Odyſſey*, but only by fragments, not propoſing to himſelf any continu'd deſign; and that he had not given any other title to thoſe diverſe parts, which he had compos'd in the heat of his fancy & the impetuoſity of his Genius, without any order, ſave only that of the ſubject and matter whereof he treated, as *The valour and proweſs of Agamemnon*, *The exerciſes inſtituted for the funeral ſolemnity of Patroclus*; *The engagement neer the Ships*, *their Number*; and ſo of the reſt; That he had done the like for the *Odyſſey* That *Lycurgus* was the firſt that brought from *Jonia* to *Athens*, thoſe ſeveral parts, diſtinct one from the other, and without any connection; And that *Piſiſtratus* was the perſon who diſpos'd them into ſome order, and, of them, made up the two Poems of the *Iliad* and the *Odyſſey*, which

|| *lib.* 13. *c.* 14.

which we now have: And from thence, as ſome pretend, is derived the name of *Rarpſodies*, which hath ſince been given to thoſe two Poems.

But I find in my ſelf a backwardneſs to aſſent to this ſtory; for it were to deprive *Homer* of his greateſt glory, to take away from him the diſpoſition of his Poems: That were a weakneſs, which I cannot allow that great man to be chargeable withal, eſpecially conſidering that *Ariſtotle* hath authoriſed the belief eſtabliſh'd ſince in all ages, to wit, that he is the true Author of thoſe Poems, though *Joſephus* in his firſt book againſt *Apion*, ſeems to be of the ſame opinion with *Ælian*, and *Plutarch*, in the life of *Lycurgus*, and *Cicero* in his third book *de Oratore*, give ſome occaſion to believe it. But this opinion would ſo highly contribute to the abſolute deſtruction of *Homers* merit, that it were better to give *Ælian* the character of a collector of trivial ſtories. As for the other three, who countenance his ſentiment, as they do not ſo peremp-

torily ſtand upon the affirmative, ſo we may well adhere to the common opinion, and be favourable to the reputation of *Homer*, which, as to this point, is too ſtrongly eſtabliſh'd, to admit of any conteſt.

Obſerv. XV.

Of the Exordiums of Homer *and* Virgil's *Poems.*

IT were to be further wiſh'd, in order to the fuller ſatisfaction we might derive from an exact compariſon of theſe two great men, that a parallel ſhould be made, between the beginings of the *Iliad* and *Odyſſey*, and that of the *Æneid*, which is the firſt touch towards the execution of thoſe excellent Poems. For though the beginings of great works ought to be ſimple and modeſt, as ‖ *Cicero* adviſes; *Principia verecunda, non elatis intenſa verbis*, and that *Horace* ſo highly blames him who begins with ſo much pomp and oſtentation *For-*

‖ *Orat.*

Fortunam Priami cantabo, &c.

yet were it not amiſs to to take a fair ſtart, and to begin well. The begining of the *Iliad*, as I tranſlate it, runs thus. *Sing, O my Muſe, of the wrath of* Achilles *the ſon of* Peleus, *that wrath which prov'd ſo pernicious to his own party, by abundance of misfortunes which it brought upon them; it occaſion'd the death of many Heroes.* He takes a pleaſure in aggravating that wrath by its cauſes and effects; he advances things with a too-confident, too violent, and too hyperbolical expreſſion, for a begining: ‖*That wrath*, ſaith he, *made a bloody ſlaughter of the bodies of the Heroes.* Thus *Didimus*, one of *Homers* moſt exact Interpreters explicates him. He does not reflect, that it is his Heroe, of whom he ſpeaks, whoſe paſſion he aggravates, and that he ſeeks out extraordinary terms, to expreſs the diſtraction it made in the Army whereof he was a great commander.

‖ αὐτὸς δ' ἔλωρια τεῦχε.

He might have ſaid things more in general, in a propoſition which ought to be ſimple; there was no neceſſity of running it over again, 'twas enough that he had call'd that paſſion *pernicious*; there is a certain affectation in the repetition of it ſo often; and he takes a pleaſure in amplifying what he ought to have conceal'd, or at leaſt alleviated. He proſecutes things yet farther, ſaying, that that implacable wrath *made the bodies of thoſe Heroes a prey to all the dogs and birds.* Nay ſo far was he poſſeſs'd by that ſpirit of exaggeration, that he impoſes upon him; for of that number of Heroes, whom the wrath of *Achilles* brought to deſtruction, we cannot in reaſon allow any to deſerve that name but *Patroclus*; and I much queſtion whether there were many among thoſe that periſh'd who might deſerve it, or had a good title thereto, A man ſhould never deſcend to that particularity in a propoſition intermixt with invocation; but what this Poet adds compleats his miſcarriage, and makes an enormous contrariety;

—Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή,

'Twas the will of *Jupiter it ſhould be ſo.* He forgets that he is ſpeaking to his Muſe, which is a Divinity, that knows all things and ought not to have forgotten any thing of what it knowes: He takes occaſion to inform it, that it was the will of God, that things ſhould happen ſo. It was the part of *Homers* Muſe to acquaint him with the ſecrets of the divine will, and what paſſes in the order of its Decrees, and not *Homers* to tell that to his Muſe, the Daughter of *Mnemoſyne* and *Jupiter*, that is to ſay, of the Underſtanding and memory. It is yet much more ſtrange in him to add thoſe words to amplify the exceſs of the deſtruction, which that wrath had cauſed the *Greeks*, ſince it had oblig'd the Gods to concern themſelves in the reſentment of that paſſion, and that it was their pleaſure, it ſhould occaſion the deſtruction of all the people of good repute in that Army. And it is to carry on the dreadful effects of that wrath to the utmoſt extremities, to authoriſe by the will of

the Gods, the defeat of the *Grecian* Army, whoſe loſs was the accompliſhment of the good pleaſure of *Jupiter*, who has the character of ſhewing kindneſs. Upon that benignity his very name is grounded, which is the ſame as *Juvans pater*.

It would be a hard matter to tell where this invocation ends: the two ſubſequent verſes are part of it, and it is confounded with the Narration, if we look narrowly upon it: beſides, to ſay the truth, what conſtruction ſoever be made of thoſe words, we ſhall find a certain affectation in them: he has a mind to fall a moralizing too ſoon, when he does it at the very entrance of a work, which is not moral, and that at the fourth verſe of it. The Readers mind is not yet prepar'd for reflections: it ought to have been inſtructed, prepoſſeſs'd, and a little inflam'd beforehand.

The Exordium of the *Odyſſey* is this, I know not whether it appear any thing more

more rational. *Give me an account, O my Muſe, of that ſubtle and expert man, who travell'd through ſo many Countries, and croſs'd ſo many Seas; He ſuffered much indeed; but ſtill he was extreamly careful to preſerve himſelf. He alſo took ſome care for the preſervation and return of his companions: but he brought not one home, they all periſhed.* An admirable Hero! whoſe eſſential character is to be ſubtle, crafty, and circumſpect, yet the interpreters allay the ſignification of πολύτροπον ἄνδρα, to excuſe *Homer*. But I do not ſee what allay can be allow'd it; beſides that in the whole proſecution of the ſtory, the conduct of *Ulyſſes* bears no other quality in particular then that of craft, which is many times manag'd by impoſtures and lies, which is in no wiſe Heroick; and *Minerva* her ſelf, however ſhe may be favourable to him, cannot forbear reproaching him therewith.

And if it be urged that that craft is a dexterity and readineſs of wit, why does he not make uſe of it for the ſafe-

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ty of his Companions, but imploy all his ſubtlety to preſerve himſelf? *But they all periſhed through their own fault.* Ought not this Heroe, a perſon ſo wiſe, and of ſuch extraordinary prudence, to have had conduct enough to ſecure them from that misfortune? Nay the very reaſon of their deſtruction is ridiculous and fabulous; *They were deſtroyed for their having eaten the Sunnes Oxen,* This is a far-fetch'd deſtruction; the Heroe, or the Poet was willing to be rid of them; and if *Ulyſſes's* providence had not been great enough to ſave his Companions who ran the ſame fortune with him, ought not the Poet at leaſt to have diſſembled it? Who obliges him to begin with that, and to advance that weakneſs of his Heroe in the Frontiſpiece of his Poem, and the moſt obvious part of it, and to implore his Muſe to celebrate the fame of that ſo ſubtle Heroe, who made a ſhift to ſave himſelf, and ſuffer'd all that were with him to be deſtroyed? Is there any thing in the world leſs Heroick, more weak and more deſpicable than this? *Taſſo,* in the

the propoſition of his Poem, makes a good advantage of that fault, for the accompliſhment of his Hero, of whom he ſaies,

——e ſotto i ſanti
Segni riduſſe i ſuoi compagni erranti.

The beginning of the *Æneid* is more ſimple and more natural, and its propoſition is without any difficulty. *I ſing*, ſaies Virgil, *the arms and valour of that Man, who having retreated from the ruines of Troy, was the firſt that came into Italy. He had much to ſuffer, through the perſecutions of the Gods, and the animoſity of Juno.* An enemy of that conſequence renders him the more conſiderable. *But after all that, he builds a great City, which is to be the ſeat of the Worlds Empire, and the Metropolis of the Univerſe.* According to this model of compariſon, all the reſt may be compar'd at leiſure,

OBSERV.

Observ. XVI.

The Concluſion of the Diſcourſe.

I Leave it to the deciſion of the Learned, what judgement ought to be made of both theſe admirable Poets, when they ſhall have taken the pains to inform themſelves of the truth of theſe Obſervations, and have particularly reflected, that all the *Grammarians*, who are the true Criticks of State having not been able to endure the luſtre of *Homers* manner of expreſſion, and the magnificence of his way of verſifying, which doubtleſs, is more brisk and glittering than that of *Virgil*, have ſuffer'd themſelves to be dazled thereby, and without penetrating to the ground of both their works, have for the moſt part attributed the advantage to *Homer*. But they all judge of of them as *Grammarians*, without conſidering the obſervations I have made.

Nay

Nay *Plutarch* himſelf, in a diſcourſe expreſsly writ by him upon *Homer*, expatiates much upon his great Learning, and the univerſal knowledge he had of all the ſciences; and he ſufficiently denotes the vaſt extent of that great Genius by the Idea he gives of his character, without inſiſting upon what is eſſential to the Poem. Accordingly, all the learned, who fix their reflections upon the expreſſion of *Homer*, and the exteriour part of his works, are not competent judges. To judge aright of them, they muſt take in the knowledg of what is eſſential, compute all the proportions thereof, conſider whether the beauties are well plac'd therein, whether the intertexture of the probable part with the miraculous, be therein judiciouſly obſerv'd, whether the licences, which poeſy permits, be not over confident, or violent, whether all the decorums, as to manners and ſentiments be therein exactly proſecuted, whether the expreſſions be ſmart & paſſionate, whether every thing keeps its proper rank, and bears its true character,

character, whether ſoundneſs of ſence and reaſon ſpread through the whole production, and whether things are all as they ought to be: for nothing can pleaſe, if it be not ſo, according to the great precept of *Quintilian*; *Nihil poteſt placere quod non decet.* In a word, they are to judge of theſe great works, as they would do of a Palace or ſumptuous ſtructure, whoſe chief beauty conſiſts in the proportion there is between the deſign in general and its parts, and their mutual rapport: this is that which ſuch as are well skill'd conſider in them, without fixing their thoughts on the exteriour ornaments, which take up the ſurvey of the ignorant.

To conclude there is among the Catalects of the ancient Poets, the fragment of an Epigram of an uncertain Authors, which may contribute ſomewhat to the judgment, which ought to be made of *Homer* and *Virgil's* Poems. This fragment ſaies, that the former is more ample, the latter more regular and compleat.

pleat. *Virgil* himſelf is the Epigrammatiſt.

Mæonium quiſquis Romanus neſcit Homerum,
Me legat, & lectum credat utrumq; ſibi:
Illius immenſos miratur Græcia campos,
At minor eſt nobis, ſed benè cultus ager.

The leſſer works are indeed ever more compleat than the great ones, in regard the Authors may beſtow more time and leaſure in the poliſhing and perfecting of them.

But in fine, to avoid being tedious by inſiſting on any further perticulars, which to do, we ſhould be oblig'd to borrow matter from *Euſtathius*, and *Servius*, the moſt eminent and exact commentators of thoſe two great men; methinks, I may ſay, without deciding any thing, as I have always pretended, that, according to the obſervations I have made, things may be thus divided: that *Homer* has more fancy, *Virgil* more diſcretion and judgment;

ment; and that if I ſhould chooſe rather to have been *Homer*, then *Virgil*, I ſhould alſo much rather wiſh that I had writ the *Æneid*, then the *Iliad* and *Odyſſey*. In which I have the approbation of *Propertius*, as it appears by his ſuffrage, which he beſtows on *Virgil*, in ſo diſintereſſed a manner, For though his reputation were much more eſtabliſhed than that of *Virgil*, and though the jealouſy of the mind, which is the true ſelf-love, be incomparably greater than that of the heart, yet does he not ſtick to take off the Crown from his own head, to place it upon *Virgils*, and to acknowledge, that all ought to give him place, nay even *Homer* himſelf.

Cedite Romani Scriptores, cedite Graii,
Neſcio quid majus naſcitur Æneide,

FINIS.